DISSENT

THE FATE OF FRANCE

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AMONG OURSELVES

It's been a busy and fruitful season for both the editors and friends of DISSENT. Apart from the normal work of editing and promoting the magazine, there have been public meetings and forums in a number of places. In New York City a public forum, at which Norman Thomas, Erich Kahler, Michael Harrington and Irving Howe spoke, and Joseph Buttinger presided, filled a large mid-town hall; there then followed a weekend of intensive discussions, at which various editors and writers, as well as friends of the magazine, presented papers. It is our hope that some of these papers will be printed in DISSENT during the coming period. The comment by Ben Selgiman in the current Journal of the Quarter is based on a paper given at this conference.

There were activities in other places. In Boston the regular DISSENT forum met several times, discussing mainly foreign policy. Also—an innovation for us—there was held, at the initiative of some young friends and entirely under their arrangement, an area student conference in Cambridge, at which students who read DISSENT were present from several schools. In Los Angeles Paul Jacobs spoke to a DISSENT group, and in San Francisco Lewis Coser and Mulford Sibley talked at meetings of the local discussion group.

●

The comming issue of DISSENT will mark the end of our fifth year, and we hope to make it a particularly good one. Apart from the usual topical and intellectual offerings, there will be a special section on China to which a number of experts will contribute.

●

We are very happy to announce that late in 1958 or early in 1959 there will appear a book to be called *Voices of Dissent,* a large collection of the best articles that have been printed in the magazine during the past five years. Details as to price, contents, etc. will be available in the next issue; but meanwhile we should like to hear from groups or organizations interested in purchasing bundle orders of the paperback edition of this book. It should be particularly valuable for campus use.

●

All of these things depend, of course, on the continued support of our readers. So far, they've done well by us. It's pleasant to report, for example, that virtually all the pledges in the fund drive that began two years ago have been paid: we're genuinely grateful. But by now the time will soon be at hand for another one—this coming fall. And the success of that will largely shape the future of the magazine for the next two years.

●

Does *your* library subscribe to DISSENT? Are you sure? Incidentally, one way of helping us, and saving yourself a bit of money, is to subscribe for two years: $5 —which is a $1 saving over 2 one year subs, but helps us by eliminating extra work, etc. These little things really help.

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A QUARTERLY OF SOCIALIST OPINION

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FREE MESSALI HADJ!

From Belle-Ile, where he has been placed in forced residence, the leader of the National Algerian Movement—Messali Hadj—made the following statement to the press on June 3:

"Obviously, I cannot hide the fact that I have been disappointed in the speeches of General de Gaulle. Disappointed, but not discouraged, because during my long life as a political militant I have witnessed many changes and many programmatic speeches. Disappointed because friends from Gaullist circles who had come to see me at Belle-Ile had told me about the liberal feelings of the 'iron man' of the 1940 days. Up till now, I cannot believe that the man who stood like a rock in those extremely difficult days for the restitution to France of its honor and its freedom cannot take account of the resistance of our people and its will to live freely.

"I have particularly noted the following passages in his speeches—

> 'This means that we must open ways which, hitherto, have been shut to many . . .
> 'This means that we must give the means of livelihood to those who do not possess them . . .
> 'And recognize the dignity of those whose dignity has been contested . . .
> 'With the elected representatives we shall see how to accomplish the rest . . .
> 'It is equally a matter of the Algerian fighters' courage, of renovation and of reconciliation.'

"I consider that this all signifies that in General de Gaulle's thought there are openings foreseeing the creation of an Algerian state which, afterwards, would lead to an English-type commonwealth, embracing France, the Magreb and French-Africa.

"This has been our conception for a long time for we believe it responds to the interests of all and is the very safeguard of peace and security for France and the whole of Africa.

"To achieve such a policy it is essential to open up 'round table' negotiations without conditions or exclusions and in the presence of all qualified representatives of the Algerian national movements.

"At such a conference, in an atmosphere of comprehension and good will, all aspects of the Algerian problem will be examined for the purpose of reaching a cease-fire, holding elections and discussing.

"We believe it to be indispensable to create a climate of understanding and to effect a psychological shock by immediately ending all capital executions, by opening the doors of the prisons, internment and deportation camps."

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THE FATE OF FRANCE

1. As de Gaulle Comes to Power...

Irving Howe

For months, it is now clear, there had been a conspiracy to overthrow the French republic. Organized by extreme rightists and semi-fascists in France and Algeria, this conspiracy soon entangled a good many army officers and drew upon the skills of Robert Lacoste, the infamous Socialist who had been Resident Minister of Algeria and an organizer of brutal repressions against the Moslem population.

Whether de Gaulle was an active participant, we do not know. Probably, in his Pilate-like fashion, he held aloof, merely intimating that he was "available." In the two weeks between the Algerian rising and his investiture as Premier, one word of reproval from de Gaulle would have dealt a severe, perhaps fatal, blow to the *colons* and the generals. That word did not come.

Even at the moment of his greatest triumph, de Gaulle elicited no marked enthusiasm from the National Assembly or the French people. The Assembly grumbled, cowered, bickered: it did not know what to do. Except for the Parisians of republican sympathies who came out into the streets, marching with discipline and sorrow in a gesture for the republic, the people were strangely quiet. They stayed at home, sick of political deceit and momentarily drained of social initiative.

If many Frenchmen resigned themselves to accepting de Gaulle as an evil more bearable than civil war—(perhaps without reflecting, and perhaps even after acknowledging, that they might thereby increase the possibility of de Gaulle first and civil war later)—they hardly shared the fatuous assumption of the N.Y. *Times* that he "incarnated in himself the soul and authority of the French nation." De Gaulle came to power as the resultant of several simultaneous pressures; but Gaullism as a movement in its own right or as a nascent ideology lacked and still lacks mass support among the French people.

This fact helps explain the curiously "moderate" character of de Gaulle's first cabinet. (Can anyone offer assurances there will not be a second?) Since he wanted the pomp of legality to cover the insurrectionary basis of his power; since he must have realized that the people remained notably lukewarm; and since he wished to preserve his independence from the Algerian *colons,* who had been necessary for grasping power but who hardly share the nationalist goals (or fantasies)

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that are his prime motivation—because of all this, de Gaulle achieved his triumph over the republic by basing himself on the very parties that, till yesterday, had been its main support and his main impediment.

Yet this does not mean that de Gaulle will necessarily content himself with keeping the center parties as the foundation of his power, or that his close supporters will indefinitely accept such an arrangement. The struggle of social forces and political outlooks that was reflected within the Assembly will now be reflected—to be sure, with an even greater distortion—in the cramped milieu of de Gaulle's cabinet and immediate entourage. And meanwhile, if only because de Gaulle has finally taken office and thereby public sanction has been given to the idea of entrusting the destiny of the nation to a military savior, the political drift in France seems at present toward rightist authoritarianism. That the *colons* and their friends in Paris, panting for an open dictatorship, are frustrated for the moment, does not controvert this analysis. It merely confirms the familiar idea that reactionaries tend to be short-sighted.

II

At the moment it may be more profitable to examine the causes of the defeat of the republic than to speculate about de Gaulle's future.

Even at the 11th hour, when the army had become emboldened by de Gaulle's implicit approval and by the evident timidity of the republican leaders, there were still possibilities for stopping de Gaulle. Had the massive demonstration of the republican left taken place the very day after the Algerian rising instead of a fatal ten days later, and had it assumed the character of combativeness rather than of mourning, its impact might have been very different. Had such demonstrations been held repeatedly in order to dramatize the sentiments of the French people, the impact might again have been different. Had the republic shown that it possessed the will to fight for its survival and perhaps threatened to cut off supplies from the insurrectionists, the *colons* and the generals might have retreated without a show of force. (Ten days of hesitation and indecision by the republic helped embolden its enemies.) Above all, however, had the Socialist deputies stood firm in their attachment to republican norms and allied themselves *as a bloc* with Mendès-France, the majority for de Gaulle would have been so slight as to make ridiculous his claim to be speaking for the entire nation. Only after a sizable minority of Socialist deputies followed their party Secretary, Guy Mollet, in supporting de Gaulle, did the defeat of the Fourth Republic become certain.*

* Would a militant defense of the republic have meant a revival of the Popular Front, in which the Communists might come to play a dominant role and from which they might profit most?

Some observers have argued that only a Popular Front could have stopped de Gaulle, others that the dangers involved in a Popular Front made even de Gaulle preferable.

We reject both views. Had the parties of the republican left fought firmly,

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The heaviest responsibility for the collapse of the republic rests upon Mollet, a man who in recent years has brought nothing but shame to the banner of socialism. Mollet bears the most fundamental responsibility because it was during his premiership that the criminal policy of harsh repressions in Algeria reached its fulfillment—a policy that gave new heart to the frightened *colons* and enabled them to build up the confidence they needed for their recent coup. At the very moment that Mendès-France, a "mere" liberal, was trying to save the parliamentary regime, Mollet was negotiating with de Gaulle and announcing to the Socialist deputies that he had found de Gaulle to be "a great man." After such buffoonery, what could the National Assembly do but commit suicide?

If tomorrow the French working class aligns itself behind the Communist Party even more thoroughly and forcefully than in the past, and if the minority of French workers that had still supported the Socialists turns from them in disgust, it will be Mollet and his chauvinist colleagues, Lacoste and Lejeune, who will bear the responsibility. These men have shown themselves to be enemies of socialism and of freedom.* Bitter words; but who else will or so much needs to say them as do socialists?

Nor do these remarks constitute a mere postmortem. This coming fall, as de Gaulle's six month rule-by-decree comes to an end, there is certain to be a new and perhaps still more severe crisis in France. One way of avoiding in November the mistakes and weaknesses of May is to reflect upon them in July.

III

What had happened in France which permitted the army, for years confined to a relatively modest political role, suddenly to become a decisive force?

A thorough-going analysis would require a volume (such as Her-

* And they have already begun to receive their just reward. When Lejeune accompanied de Gaulle to Algeria, the general's friends locked him in a room during the time de Gaulle made his speech to the crowd; they did not want Lejeune to show himself. This is in the best tradition of French farce: infamous conduct with exalted rhetoric.

---

the Communists and the workers they influence would have had no choice but to follow their lead, yet would have been unable to take control. The bolder and stronger the democratic left, the less likelihood is there that the Communists can appropriate its traditions.

But the Popular Front? That has always meant a common ideological platform, a lasting political bloc, an electoral agreement. In our opinion this is impermissible: the Communists do not constitute a democratic party or a party of the left, and there is no reason why they should be allowed to pose as one. After Czechoslovakia and Hungary it takes wilful blindness, or defeatist cynicism, to favor a lasting political coalition with the Communists.

Yet emergency situations may arise in which it becomes necessary, with all due caution, to permit Communists to participate in certain common, limited actions, provided the decisive leadership is in the hands of democratic elements. Had such actions been undertaken effectively in France, there would have been no need for a Popular Front.

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bert Luethy's) on modern France, but here let us risk a summary remark: the power of the army grew not because of any inherent social resources, but because there had been a collapse of the normal political institutions. For the super-arbiter to conquer, there had first to be a paralysis of political life, a prolonged stalemate of the contending social classes and parties.

The problems of modern France are as numerous as they are familiar: the difficulty of completing the modernization of its economy in the face of stubborn resistance from a large group of petty businessmen and shopkeepers; the failure of the state to enforce a modern and equable system of taxation; the inability of the parties to achieve stable government. Beneath these problems, however, lies a deeper one, less easy to specify but more pervasive in its effects. In recent years France has suffered from a kind of social sickness that cannot be easily or automatically related to economic crisis; on the contrary, there has been a considerable growth in the French economy. This social sickness might be described as *ressentiment,* an unfocused malaise arising out of feelings of envy and deprivation. Partly this condition has to do with the decline of France as a world power and the frustration of its imperialistic appetites; partly with the severe moral and ideological crisis which the more articulate elements of its population have been suffering for some decades. In any case, this *ressentiment* came to an irrational boil over the Algerian issue (there are also, of course, very concrete interests involved in Algeria) and the consequence has been a wracked and feverish country.

In regard to all other problems—perhaps even the severe financial crisis which has its roots not so much in an economic dislocation as in the enormous cost of the Algerian war—it might be possible to work out short-range improvisations that would pass for solutions. But in regard to Algeria a fundamental decision must be made, and it was the failure of the republican parties to see that the only way out was to negotiate with the Algerians—which meant to grant them the right to self-determination and to require from them protection for the French minority—that brought the collapse of the parliamentary regime. (The only alternative would have been an all-out war, which would have involved enormous expenditures of money and manpower, might not have succeeded in any case, and actually found little response among the French people.)

There are other factors, but they are all secondary to the problem of Algeria. One of them is that for some years now major sections of the French working class have largely been cut off from the political life of the nation, partly because of their support for the Communists. A foreign national party, a mass party that was neither revolutionary nor reformist, neither committed to a quick overthrow of the *status quo* nor to functioning loyally within it, the CP has effectively demobilized the working class. Meanwhile, the Socialists, partly because they increasingly identified themselves with conservative domestic policies

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which followed from the Algerian war, were unable to break the hold of the Stalinist apparatus upon the unions.

The clumsy structure of the Fourth Republic has unquestionably also had something—though not as much as newspaper observers suggest—to do with the recent crisis. A parade of governments not consequently different from each other yet creating an impression of instability and unseriousness, had a demoralizing effect. But this, it should be stressed, was a contributing factor, not the main cause of the crisis. The main cause was the *continuity* of policy from cabinet to cabinet in regard to Algeria and the domestic policies that accompanied the colonial war. It was this which led to de Gaulle.

IV

It would be a serious mistake to assess the meaning of de Gaulle's victory solely by the centrist composition of his cabinet and the relative moderation, thus far, of his policy and tone. When de Gaulle says that he does not wish to be a dictator, there is every reason to believe him. The idea of a dictator raises for him a series of vulgar associations, images of hysterical mobs and inflamed orators; it stinks of the *plebes,* than which there is nothing de Gaulle despises more. But anyone who troubles to look into his background, his writings, his supporters, his oratorical style should be able to see that he is a man of authoritarian impulses.

In any case, our preliminary assessment of de Gaulle need not rest upon speculations about his intentions or his motives. What should be considered are: a) the basis upon which he has taken power; b) the style of politics he embodies; c) the social and political forces that are likely to be strengthened by his victory. And once these factors are considered, there is every reason for grave apprehension.

Already, in the few days that he has been in office, de Gaulle has begun to encounter some of the realities of political life—realities that cannot quite be dissolved by his uniquely pompous rhetoric. Speaking in Algeria, de Gaulle proposed for the Moslems that they should be given full French citizenship with representation in the National Assembly. Whether he has thought out the implications of this scheme, one does not know; but it has already met with the stiff hostility of the *colons* and has been rejected by the Algerians who lead the guerrilla resistance.

It is all very well for de Gaulle to congratulate himself on his generosity toward the Moslems and, in honesty, one must admit that de Gaulle has already taken a more liberal stance toward Algeria than Mollet and Lacoste ever did. (How pitiful: that the Socialist should do the dirty work of the *colons* and the authoritarian general then come bearing phrases of liberal reconciliation!) But what de Gaulle and the rest do not face is that the Algerians should have the right and may still choose to break all ties from France. Nothing, not even Gaullist prose, can get around that. Nor can Gaullist prose provide answers to the increasingly severe financial crisis, which, particularly as long

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as the Algerian war continues, drags France to the edge of bankruptcy. It is a troublesome sign that de Gaulle's Finance Minister—Antoine Pinay, leader of the conservatives—announces a program of "austerity."

For the moment, then, de Gaulle rules as the super-arbiter leaning upon the political parties, though by his very presence helping to strengthen the trend toward authoritarianism. The struggle that has been momentarily avoided may break out again at the end of his six months' rule. The quasi-fascists are clearly preparing for the next steps. The Communists are digging in. But the republican left? Can a working arrangement be made between the Mendèsists, who represent what is healthiest in French liberalism today and perhaps even in French politics, and the majority of Socialist deputies who, in defiance of Mollet, voted against de Gaulle? Can the Socialist Party rid itself of the Mollet-Lacoste pestilence and resume its place as the spokesman for liberty? Can the fervor and determination of the French people, who remain overwhelmingly republican in their loyalty, be kindled once again?

June 8, 1958

2. *A Time of Upheaval*

Livio C. Stecchini

After a brief period of excitement over fascism and Bonapartism in France, American liberals have returned to their cherished complacency by observing that nothing has really changed in that country. Newspapermen even report the significant fact that restaurants serve the same good food and wine. But actually France is entering a period of upheaval which can bring about a revolutionary change in the social structure of the country. There is no great period of revolution for which historians have not observed that most people in responsible positions carry on with their normal lives and without realizing what is about to engulf them. Revolutions take place precisely when the ruling classes persist in their routine in spite of changed circumstances.

Since there is a revolutionary situation in France, that is, a situation in which hitherto unrecognized forces push to the fore, the task of formulating predictions becomes by definition impossible. However, one may try to assess what forces are at play.

First, one must dispel the myth with which de Gaulle has justified his seizure of power, namely, that the problem is one of reforming the French political structure by introducing a presidential constitution on the American model. That de Gaulle is a sincere man

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and actually believes this to be his task, does not speak well for his political acumen. The problem is political and not legal: England has a stable government with a Parliament that has more power than the French Chamber; when the American constitutional machinery had to solve an issue similar to the present French one, the result was secession and civil war.

If the problem is not constitutional change, what is it? It seems to me that the immediate cause of the crisis is the fact that the French Army cannot win the war in Algeria. Not winning is tantamount to defeat in a colonial war: a colonial territory which has not been "pacified" is an unconquered one. The French Army—by this I mean the professional officers—do not want to take responsibility for their defeat. Hence they blame the politicians, just as Napoleon blamed the men of Paris for his Egyptian fiasco. For this reason one may draw a certain parallel with the February Revolution in Russia. The regime of the Czar was overthrown so easily because the Russian general staff had to blame somebody for the misfortunes of the Russian army. Since Rasputin was dead and the Czarina, with her allegedly pro-German clique was in eclipse, there remained only one possibility: blame the Czar and the autocracy. Hence the notion that if Russia were to be given a constitutional government she could conduct the war successfully.

Thus de Gaulle may be compared with Kerensky. There are certain similarities between the personalities of the two men: both believed in their missions as saviors of the country, both fancied themselves to be democratic dictators, both were aloof from the facts of politics because of their integrity and vanity. But the essential point is that both have been confronted with the same problem: to finish a war without accepting defeat. The stubborn reality is that war continues in spite of all speeches and noble declarations of principle.

Lenin's strength lay precisely in that he recognized that the war had to be ended even at the cost of a Brest-Litovsk or a "Dien Bien Phu." It was a bitter pill to swallow. He tried to cover up the defeat by resituating the problem and shifting the scene to world revolution, but was not as successful as he hoped to be. Even Kerensky, in a different way, had tried to shift the political scene and make the war just another aspect of the democratic transformation of Russia. He dreamed of the period of the Terror in France: if he could score just one military victory, perhaps he could get out of his impasse; but the Russian army did not produce a Valmy in spite of Kerensky's Jacobin rhetoric to the troops. The victories of the French revolutionary armies came after a total transfer of power to new classes; not before.

The French Army does not want to bear responsibility for a military defeat. In this sense its interests are parallel to those of the French *colons,* who feel they cannot afford a defeat; but the Army is ready to play any game in order to avoid losing face, even if at the expense of the *colons.* The Army is willing to play with the fascists today and possibly with the Communists tomorrow. It is the Army, without having

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thought what it might mean, that embraced the idea of integration as a scheme to displace the political background of the war.

WILL THE CALL for integration succeed in putting an end to the war without a victory of the Algerian Front of National Liberation rebels? It may succeed because it corresponds to the true needs of the people of Algeria: the masses of Algeria would fare much better in a modern western state than in a nationalist Arab state in which they would be dominated by the native feudalistic elements. Considering the aspect of political liberty, one must not forget that there are as many power-hungry cutthroats in the Algerian FNL as there are in the Public Safety Committees.

De Gaulle could offer the Algerians what Kemal Pasha offered the Turks, but to effect such a project, drive and imagination are required. Not only is it necessary to announce a massive program for the social betterment of the Moslems, specifying the number of schools and hospitals to be built, but it is necessary to announce immediately the establishment of equal standards of wages and social security for the Algerians. And it is essential, too, that such steps as liberating Messali Hadj be taken.

There is a compelling need for measures as sweeping and prompt as Lenin's land decrees; nothing short of that will be adequate. Historical opportunities offer themselves once; if there were in the United States a government capable of political initiative it would offer to foot the bill for the cost of integration* in order to exploit the first, and possibly unique, chance of turning the tide of Nasserism in the Arab world. Not only is it necessary to proceed to concrete social reforms; it is also necessary to captivate the imagination of the people, since a matter of racial relations is also at issue. In this respect a true dictator would know what to do. But it is unlikely that de Gaulle will announce that henceforth the *Comedie Française* will perform in Arabic every third or fourth evening, or that he will appoint ten Moslems to the French Academy. Napoleon after his defeat in Egypt tried the expedient of conversion to Islam; I doubt that the French state radio is likely to broadcast that de Gaulle is ready to be circumcised if Moslem women drop their veils.

The Algerians will not be appeased merely because some characters wrapped in blankets have been appointed to the French cabinet. Integration entails a revolutionary transformation not only of Moslem society, but also of French society. It means giving political rights to the colonial proletariat; indeed, the day the colonial proletariat is united with the metropolitan proletariat, there will no longer be a problem of unstable governments in the French republic, since, as Marx remarked a long time ago, the political instability of France is the result of the even balance of social classes.

* We speak here, of course, of genuine integration of French and Moslem Algerians, not the schemes of the *colons* to rule the Algerians under the pretense of "integration."

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By comparing de Gaulle with Kerensky I did not imply that the former will necessarily fail. Kerensky could have succeeded if he had grasped the implications of what he was trying to do. So far as one can read the future, one can expect that de Gaulle will be pushed far enough along the road to integration to antagonize the French bourgeoisie and not far enough to obtain the support of the Algerians. One must keep in mind that on the evening of the storming of the Winter Palace the bourgeoisie of Petrograd was crowding the theaters and the movies or strolling on the Nevsky Prospect; solid citizens were more concerned with Chaliapin's singing than with Kerensky's proclamations. Lenin could have walked into the Winter Palace three days earlier, since Kerensky's program of democratic reforms had gone far enough to lose for him the once-enthusiastic support of the bourgoisie.

The weakness of de Gaulle is indicated by the circumstance that he is already obliged to stress parliamentary legalism, the very institution against which he started his crusade because, so he said, parliamentarians were unwilling to take the burden of drastic political decisions. My guess is that de Gaulle will rely more and more on the power of traditional constitutional processes, because he is not willing to take those steps which can build support at the mass level. Since he is not willing to do this and since he cannot achieve what the parliamentarians would like, namely, give some backbone to their rule, the only alternative is power in the streets, and this belongs to the interplay of the Army, the fascists, the Communists, and Algerian national forces.

If, instead of pandering to the sentimentality of *"la grandeur de ce vieux pays gallo-romain,"* he were able in a few months to address the world in the name of *"ce grande nouveau pays gallo-arabe,"* he will have realized his image of himself as a great historical figure. But, with or without de Gaulle, the wheels of history are grinding, and there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, in spite of the pious optimism of many American observers.

It is significant that in the month of December there reappeared, under the name of *Gregoire,* the once infamous but highly-effective magazine *Gringoire;* the jackals have smelled blood and are coming out of their lairs. Whatever one's moral judgment, we cannot deny political perceptiveness to the group of *Gringoire.* The first issue of *Gregoire* was dedicated to a comparison of Roman with French history to make the point that the Gauls, defeated by the Romans, reversed the tables by crossing the Rubicon with Caesar and marching on Rome. Whether they will be able to ride the tide or not, the former French supporters of Hitler have assessed properly the magnitude and the general trend of the future transformation of their country.

June 12, 1958

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Journal of the Quarter

CURRENT TRENDS IN U.S. ECONOMY

The interesting thing about this recession is that signs of it were visible as far back as two years ago. One indication of economic malaise was an enormous credit expansion accompanied, curiously enough, by a slowing down in the rate of economic growth. Physical output seemed, in the main, to be standing still and in some sectors even receding. Prices continued to rise while inventory accumulation began to taper off. And these trends continued on into late 1957.

Suddenly capital investments dropped $750 million. In September, production, sales and personal income declined, continuing to do so on into January. The Federal Reserve Board, discovering that the situation was no longer inflationary but one in which things had to be stirred up, proceeded to reduce the rediscount rate. Workers in manufacturing, construction and railroads who had been laid off at the year's end discovered that it was not easy to find another job. Real per capita disposable income, which had risen steadily from $1,586 in 1954 to $1,660 in 1955, began to decline. The peak had been reached in 1956 with a figure of $1,713 but by the end of 1957 it had dropped to $1,695.

By mid-January the official figure of unemployment stood at 5.2 per cent, the highest level in the last three years. Today [June 1958] the estimates are pressing close to 5-1/2 million.

MEANWHILE, the American public was edified by sounds of reassurance from the White House. The President did not consider the present level of joblessness unbearable. His economists had informed him there would soon be a "pick up" in jobs. He even promised to do something. Some weeks later he had to shift ground; he now told his press conference that it would take some time to stop the recession. But, like his illustrious predecessor of 1928-1932, he preferred to sit it out.

And the professional economists, what were they saying? At first, not much. When "soft spots" developed around September 1957, the majority thought that things might improve in December. By Christmas, when unemployment was really growing, they said we were in a little setback and spring would bring a thaw. In February they reluctantly concluded that matters could not improve without drastic action.

One group of forecasters meeting at the University of Michigan expected the decline to continue through 1958. The possibility that private investment, a significant part of Gross National Product, would drop by per-

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haps 5 per cent, seemed very important to them. Senator Paul Douglas, a skilled economist, urged tax reductions and the elimination of excises on consumer goods, estimating that as much as $4 billion might flow into the income stream as a result of such measures. Arthur F. Burns called for public works that could be completed in six to nine months. Even the more conservative economists admitted that the contraction was a severe one.

THIS WAS a most curious recession, for living costs seemed to climb to new peaks even as the number of unemployed increased. In February 1958 the BLS Consumer Price Index rose to 122.5 from 121.6 at the end of 1957. The explanation for this increase, the largest since the middle of 1956, was said to be frostbitten crops.

There was little reason to expect that the CPI would soon slide downward. Consumer prices are sticky. Generally it is not until reductions at primary levels filter back to the finished product that price declines are visible —and this takes time. But there are indications that the move to lower prices is already on. Some manufacturers have announced reductions; price cuts have been made in fibers, copper products, heating equipment, industrial machinery, farm equipment and fuels. There have been reductions through such indirect methods as bigger bonuses to dealers, absorption of freight costs and distress sales. Changes in the CPI or the Wholesale Price Index do not fully reflect the current economic situation simply because they have a built-in lag. Consumer prices in late 1929 seemed virtually the same as in 1928; the drop then did not show up until well into 1930.

Measures of national output, however, have fallen sharply. In December 1957, the Federal Reserve Board's Index of Industrial Production was two per cent below the November figure. The decline continued into March 1958 when the index dropped to 128 from a 1947 high of 148. The continued drop was attributed in part to curtailments in durable goods production; steel mill operations, which had already declined in December, decreased even further in January and February.

A NUMBER OF ECONOMISTS believe that if only home building would increase in 1958, the business recession would quickly disappear. Now, building construction is a primary factor in keeping the economy going at high levels. But the fact that construction went up a bit in January does not seem to be sufficient reason for anticipating a sharp upturn now. A close examination of the long-run figures fails to reveal any substantial recovery in construction. While the three-year decline in housing starts was halted last spring, there has been no sign of genuine strength in the industry.

A recession is intensified when it is superimposed on a declining phase of the construction cycle. This is precisely what happened in 1929-30, and some analysts are asking whether we are not in just that situation today. It is estimated that the decline in building could not be reversed before the early 1960s. Such a conjuncture of declining production and a drop in building construction suggests a troubled economic future.

THE FACT that we have not had a major contraction in the last decade

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and a half is not unprecedented. A study of business cycle data shows that there were intervals of eight to thirteen years without severe contractions following the sharp down swings of 1894, 1908 and 1921. The percentage of unemployment in the civilian labor force today is in fact greater than in the first eight years of this century. Despite our great prosperity, the rate of economic growth has been slower in the post-war era than in earlier periods when there was comparable stability. The kind of fluctuations in business cycles that we have had after the war are not too different from the past. Nor does the absence of a serious post-war deflation demonstrate that the character of the business cycle has changed. The contractions that we have had in recent years have been mild only because of the growth in capital investment stemming from World War II and the tremendous expansion in population and technology. And to these must be added the tremendous level of government expenditures stemming from the cold war.

At the moment the most serious trouble is to be found in steel and automobiles. Even *Fortune* has had to admit that the automobile industry, with sales last year of over $13.6 billion, is today in a weak position. Now this is really serious, for the earlier recoveries from the 1949 and 1954 declines were triggered by a fantastically huge capital expansion in that industry. It seems that the sales of passenger cars in 1958 will be about 800,000 units less than in 1957—which would mean total sales of under 5 million cars, or production at about 60-65 per cent of capacity.

These difficulties, in turn, have had a serious impact on steel, in which reduced buying by automobile manufacturers dampened hopes for the future. Steel operations were cut back so sharply that by March they were at only 45 per cent of capacity in all the major steel centers—Chicago, Youngstown, and Pittsburgh.

As ONE LOOKS about for causes of this most severe of post-war economic declines, the outstanding fact is that the American economy now has too large a plant for current requirements. Quite simply, we are suffering from excess capacity. This seems to be the proximate cause of the present situation. Manufacturing concerns last September estimated that they were operating at about 80 per cent of capacity as contrasted with a preferred operating rate of 90 per cent. As a result, they planned to reduce capital expenditures by 16 per cent in 1958.

Our economy has moved ahead so rapidly with plant capacity that it must now face a period in which sharp reductions in expenditures for investment are to be made. Manufacturers always like to have a bit of excess plant and equipment for elbow room. But too much freedom of this kind is undesirable, for it not only increases the overhead burden on unit output but also indicates an inability to put the plant to work. A general state of excess capacity inevitably leads to a sharp cut-back in capital investment and tends to produce a cumulative downswing in production, employment and inventory.

After World War II, manufacturing enterprises were short of capacity, at least as measured by the then effective demand. Facilities were increased between 1947-1955 at the rate of about

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6 per cent a year. Then, between 1955 and 1957 capital investment, plant and equipment jumped 40 per cent. This had a direct impact on prices, forcing some up by as much as 20 per cent. Since, however, some obsolete equipment was retired from use, the real increase in capacity seems to have been about 10 to 12 per cent, a substantial increase nevertheless. But during the same two years, output increased only by about 4 per cent—which goes far toward explaining the projected cutback in expansion plans for 1958-59. A recent SEC survey subtantiated this analysis by reporting that plant and equipment outlays for the initial quarter of 1958 would be 8 per cent below the same quarterly average of 1957.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S monetary and tax policies have contributed not a little to the downward slide. There was, in a sense, a government subsidy to this vast capital expansion. In 1954, special tax privileges were given to corporations, ostensibly to encourage investment. This was done through accelerated amortization of new fixed assets, while taxes on dividends were reduced by a special credit device. Defense-related investments were allowed a rapid five year amortization, as during the war. Yet, while capital investment grew and boomed, *per capita real personal income began to slip as early as the spring of 1956*. From 1955 to 1957 over $100 billion in additional capacity was installed, but toward the end of this period there was a perceptible and growing gap between actual production and the ability to produce.

The Administration, expressing deep concern about inflation, proceeded to cut defense spending while the Federal Reserve Board increased its rediscount rate. In the light of these antics, the charge in certain quarters that the Administration and the Federal Reserve wanted a recession in order to control labor does not seem so far-fetched. (Washington rumors have it that the Administration will do nothing until the UAW wage negotiations are over.) Administration monetary policy has only discriminated against small business firms, small municipalities and farmers. The larger corporations have been able generally to look upon Federal Reserve controls without much disturbance, for they have their own inner resources for financing. And this fact indicates the futility of the tight money policy followed last year.

Optimistic observers argue that the upturn will come soon because there will be a need to replenish inventories. *Fortune* has repeatedly advanced this view, saying that inventory cycles tend to be brief and self-reversing, unless there is a complete failure in demand. The argument is made that in this downturn, inventory liquidation has run far ahead of the decline in final purchases, so that the upturn ought to come soon. The fact, however, is that in recent months sales declines have outstripped inventory cutbacks. *Fortune's* experts overlook the fact that the automobile and steel industries are running at tremendous excess capacity ratios—which means that this recession is evidently something more than a simple inventory cycle.

The United States possesses a number of so-called built-in economic stabilizers which, we are told, will modify the effects of the present decline. These include tax cuts, increased spending, subsidies, loans and grants and guarantees to mortgage companies. We can

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put public works into operation, support farm prices and expand unemployment compensation. But are these working? Is the American economy really immune from a depression? While unemployment compensation schemes, insurance of bank deposits and adjustments of the tax rate can help slow a decline, it requires the kind of massive impact which a permanent war economy supplies, for the present downward slide to be reversed. Fritz Sternberg once said that we went into the war in 1941 with the depression still in our bones. This apt remark underscored the fact that only the war program was able to lift us to a high level of production and employment. In the absence of that, a renewal of the huge post-war prosperity would require vast new technological spurts, another burst of population growth, more consumer credit that we now have, a tremendous housing program and numerous public works. Should some of these factors be lacking, then we may very well expect a serious decline.

THE PRESENT "DIP," the third of the post-war series, is not at all like the ones which occurred in 1949 and 1954. The reduction in investment for new plant and equipment in the third one was too sharp to be overlooked. This is the major difference between then and now. Nor can we assume that the history of the post-war period will be repeated again. The expansion in the private sectors of the economy, certainly vast in 1955 and 1956, has leveled out in 1957.

This does not mean that another depression similar to that of the 30's is in the offing. But it is likely that there may be several years of activity at a level far lower than that to which we had become accustomed in the last four or five years. In saying this, I assume that the long range economic forces which played so strong a role in the last decade and a half will be much less potent. But, reply some hopefuls, if the economy would only continue the earlier years' prosperous ways, we should wind up in 1965 with a Gross National Product of perhaps $575 billion, an increase of some $15 billion a year. These estimates, however, assume that the labor force will grow as it has in the past and that capital investment and output per man hour will show a steady rise as well. Hidden in such prognostications is the belief that government will really step in to help fulfill the promise of American life.

Together with government expenditures, stemming mainly from the permanent war economy, there are said to be several long range factors which ought to sustain a generally high level of activity in years to come. These are technological improvements which will stimulate business investments, the continued growth of suburbia, a renewal of the recent commodity hunger requiring even more consumer credit, a further leveling of income distribution, and a rise in international trade.

That these forces are still strong and can give the economy a further push seems dubious. Present excess capacities cast doubt on a rise in business investment during 1958 sufficient to start things rolling once more; the economic philosophy of the present administration suggests a desire to cut back on war spending, for budgets must be balanced; the rate of growth in suburbia has clearly slowed down, if one is to judge by trends in house-

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building; and the new pattern of income distribution is largely a myth, as was so ably shown by Gabriel Kolko, in DISSENT (Winter, 1957). *It seems entirely possible that we shall continue to bump along with a higher rate of unemployment and a lower level of economic activity than was customary in recent years.*

June 1, 1958 BEN B. SELIGMAN

KHRUSHCHEV AND THE JEWS

Les Juifs Ne Savent Pas S'Organiser En Collectivité. (The Jews Do Not Know How to Organize Themselves Collectively.)

So ran the headline over an interview by Nikita Khrushchev to *Le Figaro,* a Parisian newspaper, on April 9, 1958. Staring at this headline, I found myself thinking back, with apparent inconsequence, to a catch-phrase which a few decades ago socialist and Marxist groups frequently used to employ. The catch-phrase was: "a society can be judged by its treatment of women."

Socialists had not said that the character of a society can be determined by its production statistics; they had said that the true quality of a society could be discovered in its treatment of women—women who from the beginning of history had suffered injustice and exploitation. The measure of a society is a *human* measure.

Or so it had always been assumed until, as one of the improvements of the twentieth century, we had come up against people who persist in calling "socialist" a society of which its leading figure, its representative spokesman—Nikita Khrushchev— is a vulgar anti-Semite.

II

I quote from Khrushchev's interview with *Le Figaro**:

> The USSR was the first country in the world to decide to aid the Jews no longer as individuals but as a people. For this purpose we chose a sparsely populated region in Siberia, north of Manchuria, Birobidjan. We put it at the disposal of the Jews . . . It was a remarkable gift. The land of Birobidjan is as fertile as any that exists . . . The Jews left *en masse* for Birobidjan. They were enthusiastic, exultant. . . . And now? Now very few remain. Currently the arrivals and departures continue, but one must acknowledge that the departures predominate more and more . . .
>
> If one draws a balance sheet, it must be admitted that Jewish colonization in Birobidjan has been a failure. They arrive there all fire and flame, then one by one they come back.
>
> What is the explanation for this unfortunate phenomenon? In my opinion it is to be found in historic conditions. In all ages the Jews have preferred artisan trades: they are tailors, they work in glass or precious stones, they are merchants, pharmacists, cabinetmakers. But if you take the building trades or metallurgy you can't find a single Jew to my knowledge. *They*

* I wish to thank Eugenia Herbert for translating the *Figaro* interview. Some of the material in this article is taken from documents made available by the Theodor Herzl Foundation and also from two pamphlets published in Yiddish in Tel-Aviv, each entitled "Jewish Communists On the Jewish Question in the Soviet Union."

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don't like collective work, group discipline. They have always preferred to be dispersed. They are individualists . . .

A second characteristic: the Jews are in essence intellectuals. *They never consider themselves sufficiently educated.* As soon as they can manage it, they want to go to the university . . . A real Jewish cultural community is no more realizable than a political community; the Jews are interested in everything, to go to the roots of everything, discuss everything and end up by having profoundly different opinions.

There exists in the USSR less numerous and less initially gifted nationalities than the Jews. But these non-Jewish nationalities are capable of organizing a common existence, and thus it is possible for them to forge lasting national institutions. [Emphasis added—I. H.]

III

It would be the sheerest insult to the readers of DISSENT to "discuss" this rubbish. But a few observations:

a) Why does the fact that the Jews "never consider themselves sufficiently educated" prevent them from establishing a "real Jewish cultural community"—unless, of course, it be their alleged insistence upon going "to the roots of everything" and discussing "everything," admittedly not a mode of behavior calculated to make one popular with the rulers of the Russian state?

b) By labeling certain characteristics, particularly intellectual interests, as harmful to collective life, Khrushchev singles out the Jews as the one —*the only*—major group not fitted for normal life in Russian society.

c) If they are inherently unsuited to a collectivist society, why not permit the Russian Jews to emigrate to some other country?

IV

In October 1957 a delegation of British Communists, which included Professor Hyman Levy, perhaps the outstanding intellectual with open membership in the British CP, visited the Soviet Union. The report which this delegation brought back about the condition of the Jews in Russia and published in the British Communist paper, *World News,* was amazingly frank. It was written by Levy himself, who was subsequently expelled by the party for expanding his criticism into a book.

Levy confirms the fact that since 1948 there has been no publication of Yiddish or Hebrew books in Russia; that among Russian Jews the years from 1948 to 1952 were commonly known as "the black years"; that the entire membership of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, previously the main Communist political body among the Russian Jews, had been liquidated. His report gives a vivid but by now, alas!, all too familiar description of how the Yiddish writers were arrested, taken to camps and finally shot.

But what is most interesting in Levy's report is his summary of a conversation with Suslov, the neo-Stalinist member of the Russian Politburo. Why, asked the British Communists, are there still no Yiddish newspapers, books and theaters in Russia? Because, answers Suslov, the Jews have not requested them. And why not? Because, answers Suslov, the vast majority of Jews in Russia have been absorbed into Russian life, a great many of them are party members, they have no interest in preserving cultural distinctiveness, many of them do not even know Yiddish.

Wonder of wonders! The Jews who in Khrushchev's version are unassim-

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ilable cosmopolites, unalterably hostile to "colective work and group discipline," turn out to be, in Suslov's version, so perfectly integrated into Soviet society that they have lost all interest in collective identity.

Which totalitarian do you believe?

V

The Jewish Communists—the handful that remains in America—have been suffering intensely under the blows of Khrushchev's statements. In their Yiddish paper, the *Morning Freiheit,* of April 13, 1958 there appeared a long editorial both rebuking and pleading with Khrushchev; even they, apparently, could not avoid seeing that Khrushchev's statements come from the traditional storehouse of anti-Semitic fables. I quote a few passages from the *Freiheit:*

> The injustices that were committed against the Jewish people in the last years of the Stalin regime have been only PARTIALLY rectified—in the respect that the work of Yiddish writers are being published in Russian . . . BASICALLY the question has remained mutilated in that Jewish culture has NOT been revived, in that cultural INSTITUTIONS and SOCIAL institutions whose destruction began toward the end of the '30s . . . have not been revived. At the root of this mutilation lies a theory which is partially felt in the [Khrushchev] interview . . .
>
> Jews are ostensibly too individualistic, have varied cultural tendencies, dislike collective labor and are against group discipline . . .
>
> [But] under very difficult conditions the Jews have showed heroism in building Birobidjan, as they showed heroism DURING THE WAR, in constructing socialism in the Soviet Union . . .
>
> The Jewish folk masses showed their ability for organization and collective work IN AMERICA in constructing the union movement with great sacrifices . . .
>
> The regrettable interview demonstrates the urgency of this question. The progressive Jewish elements which value the role of the Soviet Union in the struggle for freedom are awaiting the moment when this question can be solved. And this moment cannot come too soon—it has been delayed too long. [Capitals in original]

VI

How this question is at present being "solved" can be surmised from the following facts:

a) In January 1958, on the occasion of his 60th birthday, the Soviet-Yiddish poet, Samuel Halkin, received a Soviet Order and was guest of honor at a writers' reception in Moscow. The committee in charge was headed by the Rusian poet Sergei Vasiliev, a leader in the anti-Semitic incitement against "rootless cosmopolitans" in 1948-9 who had then written an "anti-cosmopolitan" poem entitled "Without Whom Is It Good to Live in Russia" (his poem is still being circulated in Russia). None of the speakers at the reception for Halkin (who had been arrested in 1948 and was released only in 1955) mentioned Yiddish literature; not a single Yiddish writer was invited to speak; the Yiddish poems written in Halkin's honor were published in Poland and France, but not in Russia.

b) A year ago there appeared a volume, "The Achievements of the Soviet Regime in 40 Years in Figures," issued by the State Publishing House for Statistics in Moscow. The 358 pages of the book include statistics and tables about almost every conceivable aspect of Russian life; but nowhere does the word "Jew" appear. It is as if this

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people did not exist. More specifically: On page 294 there is a table which depicts the "Publication of Books in the Different Languages of the Soviet Peoples," giving comparative figures for 1913 and 1956. *Yiddish is not listed* —though even "Tat," the language of a Daghestan tribe, is credited with a single item in an edition of 1,000 copies. Now it is a known fact that no Yiddish publications appeared in 1956. But in 1913? In 1913 there was an enormous quantity of Yiddish publication in Russia. The book in question, however, lists nothing for Yiddish either in 1913 or in 1956.

c) In an official Soviet booklet entitled "The National Traditions of the Peoples of the Soviet Union" published by the State Publishing House in Moscow, it is declared that 10,940 soldiers and officers received the order "Hero of the Soviet Union" during the Second World War. There follows a break-down by nationalities —and the total comes to 10,543. Three hundred and ninety seven persons are missing, what would constitute the third largest nationality grouping, after the Russians and Ukrainians.

No Jews are listed.

In 1944, however, it was announced in Moscow at a meeting of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee that until April 1, 1944 there had been 3,517 recipients of the award of "Hero of the Soviet Union," among whom were more than 100 Jews. In subsequent years Jews were similarly mentioned in Russian publications. But by April 1957, so far as statistics for war-time heroism are concerned, the Jews had ceased to exist.

VII

It is true: the quality of a society can be judged by its treatment of women.

IRVING HOWE

For Imre Nagy . . .

To their memories even their executioners had to pay tribute: they dared not say that the defendants had confessed! For reasons of their own, the executioners announced their deed on the fifth anniversary of the revolt of the East Berlin workers, placing it truly in its proper historical context. The June days of East Berlin were the spark that ignited the October days in Hungary.

Nagy and his friends lacked the political skill of a Gomulka; they could not convince both the Russian rulers and their own followers that they were the right men to lead their country during a period of transition. Nor was Nagy a revolutionary leader who could articulate the needs and firmly direct the demands of the people. He did not lead the movement which brought him to power; he was carried away by it. In the memory of the Russian Revolution, which he witnessed, and the Civil War years, in which he participated, he wanted to return to the original meaning of socialism through a series of reforms. He wanted to mend fences that had to be broken down. But in wanting reforms, he became the symbol of a revolution. Given integrity and an unwillingness to compromise, the reforms he and his friends proposed had to end in rebellion. And because he advised the leaders of his party that "in the interest of the people, the country and socialism, let them depend not on bayonets but on the people," he had, finally, to be executed in a land of tyrrany.

If in the days to come the movement begun in East Berlin, Posnan and Budapest spreads, the names of Imre Nagy and his friends will be remembered. They will perhaps be honored most if men learn from their mistakes.—L. S.

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TWILIGHT OF THE INTELLECTUALS

Harold Rosenberg

It will be a bad night when, lacking truth itself, man suppresses the superstition of truth.—RENE CHAR

Much of the potency of contemporary attacks on socialism lies not in the points they score against Marx's ideas—since these points when valid could be made equally well, and often have been, by Marxists themselves—but in the fact that all ideas have turned out so badly. Ideas as such are suspect. A century ago Cardinal Newman thought that one might "look for a blessing through obedience even to an erroneous system, and a guidance even by means of it out of it." Today, from the truest system nothing but evil is expected, if only because it is a system. As for guidance out of it, the more systematic it is the deeper it leads you into its trap. Once inside, the only hope is to break the system to pieces.

Given this attitude toward ideas, does it matter whether a critique of Marxism is referring to the conceptions of Marx, of Lenin or of Stalin? Any error, crudity or malice found in one may as well be attributed to the others. For they have, indisputably, one thing in common: they are "ideologies," that is, interpretations in which all events hang together. In such a coherence itself one already sees the outlines of a prison cell.

This mood is typified by Raymond Aron's *The Opium Of The Intellectuals.** Its pages gasp for the open air of a world cleared of ideologies. To him "ideology" is synonymous with "myth" and myth with a fog in the brain. The largest part of his book consists of blasts at phantasies generated by Marxism: "The Myth Of The Left," "The Myth Of The Revolution," "The Myth Of The Proletariat," "The Illusion Of Necessity." Aron knows the weak spots of Marxian theory and the nightmares connected with it in practice, though the advantage of this knowledge seems diminished by the fact that he feels obliged to reject, for example, the term "capitalism" in favor of "the West."

Beyond Marxism, *The Opium* is striking at all ideologies, and at their creators and carriers, the intellectuals, particularly the French intellectuals. From the café tables of St. Germain des Prés, Aron sees rising the image-laden fumes that make all of France giddy. Will the

* Doubleday. 324 pp. $4.50

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French intelligentsia never stop playing with the colored balloons of doctrinal solutions? Until they give up this pastime and get to work, France will not regain her balance. But, Aron prophesies, "The End Of The Ideological Age" may be approaching, and on this note *The Opium* concludes. In this Spring's *Partisan Review* ("Coexistence: The End Of Ideology") he goes further: the extinction of ideologies must come or mankind itself will be destroyed.

By the end of ideologies M. Aron means an end to an interest in political theories and of "nostalgia for a universal idea." The model for how nations shall think in the future is America—and the model intellectual for M. Aron is none other than the contemporary American, the intellectual as "expert" engaged in doing his job and suspicious of abstractions and systems. "The United States," declares Aron enthusiastically, "knows nothing of ideological conflicts in the French sense of the word ... On the other side of the Atlantic there is no sign of either the traditions or the classes which give European ideas their meaning." (I hope our Southerners are listening.)

AMERICA HAS SOLVED the problem of the intellectuals—except that, in M. Aron's view, there never was any problem here. Back in the Depression, he recalls, some radical exhalations did blow over from Europe; soon, however, our natural sobriety reasserted itself. For actually, there was nothing to lose one's head about. "In the name of what European values could the intellectual turn his back on the American reality?"

M. Aron admires us—with a vengeance. Not only don't American intellectuals have any ideas, nobody pays any attention to them in any case. How superior to the situation in France, where "writers with no authority whatsoever can obtain large audiences even when they treat of subjects about which they quite openly boast of knowing nothing—a phenomenon which is inconceivable in the United States..." (At least so long as we have a President to fill the bill.)

For those in America who continue to criticise, before tiny audiences naturally, M. Aron "conveniently borrows" Louis Bromfield's genial description of the American radical as "a doctrinaire supporter of Middle European socialism ... subject to the old-fashioned philosophical morality of Nietszche which frequently leads him into jail or disgrace." Echoing our own ex-Left, M. Aron dismisses these dissidents as out of date: "There are some American intellectuals who remain faithful to the tradition of anti-conformism and who attack simultaneously digests [readers'], the trusts, McCarthyism [written in 1955 *The Opium* is also out of date, and in more ways than one] and capitalism. But this anti-conformism is not without a certain conformism itself, since it resurrects the themes of the militant liberalism of yesterday."

In part, Aron's vision of us is simply the old European stereotype of Primitive America, land of cowboys and Indians and millionaires, all of these being, of course, pragmatic people intent on specific ob-

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jectives and without appetite for ideas. That Aron presents this image as an object of emulation rather than of contempt does not alter its character. "In the name of what *European* values could the intellectual turn his back on the American reality?" Any criticism of America could only be made in the name of European ideas—of themselves Americans know only *things.*

But there is more to this conception than the Old World platitude of American barbarism. Aron bases himself also upon what American intellectuals have been saying about themselves and doing during the past decade or so, as well as upon the temper of the nation that had elected Ike and was preparing to do so again. In a word, the sage of The League For Cultural Freedom is reporting America correctly, at least so far as appearances are concerned. The question is: has he understood what he is reporting? And is he correct in applying the measure of the post-war American to intellectuals elsewhere?

LET ME MAKE IT CLEAR without delay that I share M. Aron's ideal of the disappearance of the intellectuals. Who but one with a taste for priests would desire this peculiar caste to flourish? Except perhaps that portion of it that works quietly in the laboratory, the study, the classroom. The others, the ideological ones, those who want to remake the world, the revolutionists in everything from paint to politics, those who never stop talking save when someone puts to them a pertinent question, these people have proved themselves as a group more trouble than they are worth. With too few exceptions, they are false, fanatical, arrogant, greedy, emotionally unstable, morally sophistical, politically and socially untrustworthy—by nature they are traitors both to their ideas and to themselves, even without bribe or force, from an ineradicable nostalgia for community with other people, who essentially revolt them, and from sheer weariness with their aimless egos. This type has manifested the same disagreeable traits throughout the world, in the "new nations" as in the old, wherever the breakdown of authority has given prominence to ideas.* Is it an exaggeration to say that in no place where he has appeared is the intellectual loved? And if, besides, he now endangers the world, as M. Aron warns, that should certainly settle it.

Aside from his deplorable character which makes his presence in any society of dubious advantage, there is a deeper reason for desiring the elimination of the intellectual with his ideological carpetbag. He stands for deficiency in human life, a blank spot in being. The thought of an all-real world, from which abstractions, utopias, higher states and other projections of the mind have been banished, has charmed every true humanist, including Marx though not Aron's Marx. No ideas, no intellectuals. Only the concrete existence adequate to itself of individual men and women.

* It may be, or it may not be, that intellectuals are, as Aron says, "closely linked to the national community"—as a type they transcend nationality, as anyone may ascertain by dropping in at the U.N. building.

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The goal of supplanting doctrines and superstitions with material profusion belongs equally to the dream of America as a paradise on earth and to the dream of Socialism as an earthly paradise. The dreams differ only with regard to when ideas are to be gotten rid of—in the American dream they can be dispensed with now; while Socialism wants to hold on as the last idea and liquidate itself only when all other ideas have been defeated.

In practice, however, both America and Socialism have tended to behave, whenever things have gone well, as if paradise had already been attained and to dispose of ideas prematurely. In response to this demand an intellectual without ideas appears, one whose function is indeed to stand guard against ideas as a disintegrating force. This "sobered" intellectual, serving society as a hired man, whether as expert or bureaucrat, is the figure of Aron's admiration in the United States and, in a reserved way, in the Soviet Union.

In believing that "the American reality" has permanently transfixed the American mind, this Frenchman is dreaming the American dream. Let us remember that this dream was a European product in the first place. "In the name of what European values could the intellectual turn his back . . .?"—a typical American-dream question. It makes one think of a certain mariner-theoretician debarking on the glistening sands of the West Indies one refulgent morning. The same question could be heard booming in chorus from these shores since the onset of post-War prosperity. "Why should we not shed our European illusions ("myths")? Daily life is enough for us, not to say too much. We don't need ideas and what's more we don't want any." And M. Aron sums up this rosy condition in prose: "These intellectuals are perfectly reconciled with the United States" (whatever that means).

GIVEN THIS HAPPY conclusion, it is hard to see why Doubleday brought us M. Aron's tract unless perhaps to indicate where we could find a foreign market for our mental vacuum cleaners.

Unfortunately, Aron's liquidation of the American intellectual as the vanguard of the vanishing intellectuals of the world is no more to be depended on than the related attempt by his American friends to liquidate themselves. If, as he says, "anti-conformism is not without a certain conformism," anti-ideology is not without a certain ideology. The notion that radical criticism is a symptom of doctrinaire hangover or mental ankylosis has been pressed upon us from every source, including philistine psychiatry, ever since the ex-Left discovered it had a part to play in the Cold War, the part of penitents and "responsible" underwriters of social unanimity. But adopting this role did not result in the extinction of the American intellectual as a species—it was simply a new affirmation of his morbid character. Having raised to the level of a philosophy the old backwoods suspicion of the intellect and intellectuals, directed against the city, the intelligentsia became more active than ever. If, as M. Aron insists, the American intellectuals

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have had to go looking for an enemy, it was because they decided not to find him where he lives but to take on instead the enemy's enemy, that is to say, "ideology," or in our beautifully onomotopoetic synonym, the "isms"—whether it be Socialism, Fascism, Zionism or even New Dealism. Given the mood induced by the failure of ideas mentioned above, this antidoctrine overflowed our borders and reappeared as a world idea.

In his identification with the outlook of our typical "integrated" prosperity intellectual, Aron exemplifies the phenomenon, about which too little is known, of the flotage of ideas from their original mooring in historical fact and their fall-out in distant places. For almost four decades the Russian October was wafted around the globe in the form of abstract aims and illusory adventures; only since the parody of Budapest have The Ten Days That Shook The World begun to lose their hallucinatory power outside the USSR (in Russia the revolutionary charade faded much earlier). Why should not the unprecedented build-up of prosperity in the United States of the fifties, with its activation and absorption of the social premises of The New Deal—recognition for labor, pensions and benefits, G.I. rights and civil rights—win adherents outside the continent where it took place as realizing in practice advances which socialism could only promise. The Russian Revolution left a residue of dead ideas, American prosperity the idea of no-ideas.

Aron is a fellow traveler of the American fact. The immanent assumptions of United States accomplishment are the groundwork of his non-doctrinal progressivism, his trust in common sense, his impatience with theory. They are also the basis of his Utopian view of American life—e.g., as devoid of social conflict—and his journalist's contempt for cafe radicals and "talkers."

"France exalts her intellectuals, who reject and despise her; America makes no concession to hers, who nevertheless adore her," Aron marvels. The assumption is: Treat 'em rough, they like it. Though we have already seen there has been no one here to make any concessions to. Still, one could mention Congressmen who would consider the word "adore" too strong.

Adoring America or rejecting France has, of course, nothing to do with the relation between intellectuals and their country; the psychology of patriotism, if one must so remind an expert in Marxist "oversimplifications," is much too complex to summarize in a word. What caused American social criticism to slacken was total employment. With individual talents supplied with resources to work *within* society, the very definition of the intellectual underwent a change in America—from the ominous outsider of the days of the "brain truster" and the Red, he became the inferior "egghead," that is, a social type identified by his look and his vocabulary.

If America could maintain the incorporation of its intellectuals

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in productive labor, there might continue to be nothing to ideologize about, except perhaps the menace of ideology—in their material paradise (i.e., reality without opium) they could go on living in a state of adoration.

The Opium Of The Intellectuals fails even to consider whether the American intellectual's pre-occupation with "fact" belongs to conditions of a particular period, rather than to a fixed status within the nation. This taking for granted that our paradise is here to stay reveals the idealistic underpinning of M. Aron's skepticism. Perhaps he has forgotten how in the years following the Russian Revolution the most ideological generation in history was drawn into "socialist construction" and "reconciled with its reality." Did this yielding to fact make the Russian intellectuals similar to the practical Americans, or did their ideological motives cause them to resemble the idea-intoxicated French?

Aron's contrast of adoring Americans with rejecting Frenchmen is owing to more than the mistaken impression of a foreigner taken in by the "typical attitudes" of a moment; his error is made possible by his static definition of the intellectual according to ancient categories of employment: "clerk," "expert," "man of letters," all three being groupings within society. While the intellectual is designated socially by his occupation, no definition by occupation alone can distinguish the modern intellectual from his "non-intellectual" counterpart in the vast array of professions and crafts that constitute the organization of work in contemporary society. The same function may be performed by two "experts" seated side by side in a newspaper office or advertising agency, yet one is an intellectual and the other is not. What distinguishes one from the other is precisely his non-identification, open or veiled, with his métier and his self-separation from its values. This is strikingly apparent in a study like Whyte's *The Organization Man,* whose author, without any revolutionary intention, defines himself as an intellectual, in contrast with socially identical Orgmen, *by the sole fact of his inner dissociation* from the organizational universe.

ARON HAS COMPLETELY ignored the composition of the intellectual caste by which it is re-defined under specific conditions as *a caste of social delinquents.* In a society that has reached a certain degree of literacy, which makes it susceptible to the formation of ideological bands, and in which, consequently, one may qualify as an intellectual in terms of social dynamics without having gone beyond the fifth grade, this re-definition on a large scale is inseparable from a "revolutionary situation."

To meet such a situation heroes are needed. But by what, except by the consciousness of a "plot" in history, that is to say, by a "myth," are men transformed into heroes? The aim of Marx's writing was that, in the predictable crises to come, a mass hero raised up out of the modern city should act in consciousness of itself and its possibilities. In it

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the humanitarianism of the 19th century was heightened to the pitch of world drama. Marxism offered the conception of a universal *acting of progress* to the point of universal victory. This myth has not been realized, and to Aron's mind it has stood in the way of real progress.

Suppose that Aron has his way and in a social crisis the intellectuals continue peering into their microscopes or analyzing the prosody of Virgil and nobody comes forward with the myth of a better world? (Or is such a supposition unreal, since without the ideological mists exuded by the intellectuals there would never be a crisis? Perhaps Algeria is the effect of an opium discourse that went wrong—and shopkeeping and ranch-owning colonials and poverty-stricken Moslems are only parts of the mirage.)

Be that as it may, suppose a crisis exists and no ideologist comes forward. Will the result be a calm development of wise solutions by the experienced men of affairs in whom M. Aron reposes such trust and whose hands he would have us untie by disappearing? Is that what has happened in France among, for example, the Centrist parties, whose ideologies are certainly blurred enough to satisfy anyone? Or does the absence of universals tend rather to result in a day-by-day yielding to events, until the steady erosion of principles become the accompaniment of a paralysis of the will? For what is a crisis but a situation in which the practical men of affairs, who are always the people in power, have already failed, exposing the limits of the practical intelligence.

Once a hero is needed the absence of ideologies will not save the day for the skeptic and pragmatist. Rather will a dream of unreason supply what the dream of reason could not. The anti-intellectual intellectual like Aron has no power to prevent history from going mad. In the end his common sense can have only the effect of promoting a distrust of ideas that brings capitulation to the myth of the man of action.

Since history has not achieved a steady sanity, the time for the extinction of the intellectual has not yet arrived. Unpleasant as it is to have us around, and anxious as we are to get rid of ourselves, society has no choice but to put up with us—if for no other reason than that we can at present be abolished only by other myth-makers. We are stuck with ourselves, and the world is stuck with us at the price of making itself perfect. Perhaps when everyone has defected from the common "reality," that is, when everyone has become an intellectual, the role of the intellectual will be ended, and with it that unhappy species itself.

FOR ONE WHO SCORNS ideologies Aron derives too much from the evidence of "opinion makers" and too little from the hints contained in historical analogies. He has performed the astonishing feat of writing a book on the modern intellectual without mentioning the disintegration of social classes and the estrangement of individuals—he has even forgotten to mention the Jews! Having no concept of the stranger, he misses the tension between the intellectual and his neigh-

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bors, even in a country he adores, and between one band of intellectuals and another. Hence he can only note as an oddity the vicious anti-egghead campaign of America's 1952 elections (erroneously set by Aron in '53), with its overtones of persecution for sedition and foreign alliance.

The poison of the intellectuals since World War I, the poison responsible for the catalepsy of the Third International as for other collapses, has been the ideal of practicality, of a politics and social philosophy stripped of "myth" and "ineffectiveness," of a subordination to "reality," in sum, of their own disappearances as intellectuals. This is the drug that has transformed the fighting humanitarian Dr. Jekyll into the bureaucratic and "responsible" Mr. Hyde. The worst of it is that the somnambulist Hyde dreams not only that he alone is awake but that he is vigorously bringing into being the very same world that his original could only feebly imagine.

From the address to the Assembly of Mendes-France on May 21, as printed in L'Express the next day:

[Mendès-France opened his address by stating that he and many others who had great respect for de Gaulle dating back to the war days had long hoped that de Gaulle would come to the aid of a troubled France and had pleaded with him to do so.]

"Not once did General de Gaulle respond to these appeals. And now it happens that sedition is enacted in Algiers, that civil and military functionaries make momentous decisions, in the name of General de Gaulle. Immediately they achieve the goal for which others strived for so long in vain. The voice of June 18, 1940 is raised once more, but, alas, it is raised only to justify or excuse the acts of the Algerian insurgents, and to condemn the political parties while keeping silent on the insurgent factions or excusing their uprising. . . . This voice which we barely recognize—who will ever forget the eighteenth of June?—this voice offers to the Algerian insurrectionists an echo from metropolitan France . . .

[Mendès-France went on to speak of the possibility of civil war.]

"To say that such a civil war derives from the confronting of patriots—those who aspire to a national renascence and consolidation of the French Union—with the defenders of a discredited regime whose weaknesses de Gaulle condemns is to misstate the political option of the moment. The failures of all these years, the storm clouds of demagoguery, the frequent neglect of the most essential national interests, the evil practices, the constant capitulation to special interest groups—all derived from the mediocrity of our economic policy and the weaknesses of our policy toward the French Union—these are faults that some among us have relentlessly denounced and have never acquiesced in. We hope that out of this crisis will come at least the wish to put an end finally to these weaknesses. But we do not believe that in order to do so it is necessary to abandon the principles of republican government and the liberties to which our country holds fast or to yield to the pressure of rioters or street mobs, either in Algiers or in Paris. . . .

"A former Minister of Algeria . . . poses the question in a journal published in the Southwest: 'Will it be necessary to sacrifice Algeria in order to save the Republic or to lose the Republic in order to save Algeria?' My answer is that at this hour you risk losing both at once, the Republic and Algeria. . . ."

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The article that appears below is taken from a forthcoming book entitled The Philosophy of Art History, *to be published by Alfred A. Knopf in the fall of* 1958. *It forms part of a chapter called "Educational Strata in the History of Art: Folk Art and Popular Art." We wish to thank both the publisher and Professor Hauser, the author of* The Social History of Art, *for permission to print this selection, which continues the discussion of mass culture that has been appearing in the pages of* DISSENT *during the past few years.*—THE EDITORS.

POPULAR ART AND FOLK ART

Arnold Hauser

The commercial practices of the entertainment industry certainly constitute one of the most ominous aspects of the present cultural crisis; but really it is not so much the commercialization of art-production which is so novel and important for contemporary interpretation; it is rather the present alienation and detachment of higher art, which, since the romantics, has claimed to exist for the artist alone, and takes or pretends to take no account of the public. This ostensible lack of regard for the public is no doubt usually a cloak to cover the artists' desperate competition for public favour, but the ideal of an art that is disinterested, makes no concessions, is inevitably misunderstood by the present generation and appreciated only by future generations, is nonetheless a genuine ideal and basic for the world-view of the romantic. Before the day of romanticism, every art-product was recognized as being a commodity to a greater or lesser extent; every work of art had its price, though this was not necessarily paid down in hard cash. The artist accepted it, in one form or other, without any false shame, and scarcely ever had any feeling that he was giving way when he complied with his patron's wishes. He realized that his true value was not enhanced by keeping up a semblance of independence; it was only the romantic's bad conscience that attached such extraordinary value to that semblance. In a word, the new, queer feature about the modern artist's relation to his profession is his unnatural, inhibited attitude towards everything material and practical, not the fact that he plies his art as a trade.

Since the romantics, the artist has the feeling of being faced, not by a friendly patron or a circle of well-known, well-disposed individuals interested in art, but by an indefinite, indifferent and often hostile public. He stares out at an expressionless mask and tries to

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imagine behind it a more sympathetic audience somewhere in the far future. Such imaginings are vain, unfruitful, and dangerous. The alienation of the idealist from the present entails no less of a risk than the materialist's readiness to compromise; the former is in danger of developing a private language and becoming unintelligible, the latter of becoming in the end unable to speak anything but the impersonal, colourless language of the masses. Present-day art moves between these two dangers; in such a situation, in which neither of the extremes can be accepted with equanimity, no artist, be he ever so uncompromising, should ignore the requirements of popular art.

What marks the commercialization of art in the age of mass culture is not just the effort to produce salable, if possible the most profitable, works of art—apart from the romantics and their circle that was common enough in former times—but rather the notion of finding a formula by which the same type of thing may be sold to the same type of public on the biggest possible scale. The business man is often accused of sticking to the same model as long as possible because, as is well known, it is precisely the salability of the same product over a long period which makes a business really profitable. But oddly enough, he is also accused of artificially inducing a demand for new types, that is, for a change of fashion, so as to increase consumption. As Georg Simmel describes it: "Articles are not first produced, then become fashionable; articles are produced to create a fashion."[1] In practice, no doubt, both methods are employed, as best suits the situation. Certainly, modern mass production plays upon people's wants in a manner that often runs counter to the natural development of their taste; sometimes it creates a new demand, sometimes it artificially keeps an old demand in being.

The question then arises as to whether the phenomenon of the mass, that is, spiritual monotony and lack of independence on the part of the public, is the effect of the artificial standardization of modern are production; or whether the masses themselves are to be blamed for the low quality of the art served up to them. Does the public really get what it wants, or is it conditioned to want what is set before it? No doubt, the entertainment industry does little or nothing to educate the man in the street in independent thinking, to improve his taste or strengthen the sense of his own personality, but even if it wanted to do so, this would not be easy. It is certainly easier to manipulate puppets than personalities, but in any case the masses do not consist of personalities. To charge publishers, film producers, and record manufacturers with carrying on a planned conspiracy to keep their public from growing up spiritually seems rather fantastic.

THE STRUCTURE OF MODERN INDUSTRIAL society, the mechanical regularity of city life, the inevitable, if largely unintentional and unconscious, adaptation of the individual to the common forms of behaviour disposes men to be mass-minded; and this disposition is being continuously intensified by means of press, radio, cinema, advertise-

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ments, posters, in fact everything that the eye sees and the ear hears. The facts to be noted, the issues to be decided, the solutions to be accepted are all served up to the people in a form to be swallowed whole. In general they have no choice and are quite content to have none. The mistake is to suppose that the masses thought or felt differently in the days when there were not quite so many of them. They never were any more capable of judging, never had a more independent or more reliable taste, never had any objection to having their spiritual nutriment predigested for them. If the art products that they formerly accepted were of somewhat better quality than at present, that was only because such products were not in the first instance made for them. Art for general consumption is always on a lower level than art produced for the educated. But however small the change in this respect, however unimportant quantity always is as compared with quality in matters of art and culture, the consequences of the fact that ever greater masses of people are coming into the market as consumers of art are quite incalculable. The products of mass culture not only ruin people's taste, make them unwilling to think for themselves, educate them in conformity; they also open the eyes of the majority for the first time to fields of life which they never came in contact with before. Often they are confirmed in their prejudices, but still a way is opened for criticism and opposition. Whenever the circle of consumers of art has been widened, the immediate result has been to debase the level of artistic production. The most instructive example is that of the dissolution of the courtly-aristocratic culture and the rise of a bourgeois culture at the end of the rococo; while the rise of the middle classes about the middle of the nineteenth century affords another example. Today, in consequence of the emergence of the lower middle class and certain sections of the industrial workers as purchasers of art, a phenomenon well known in past history is recurring. Though the present situation may not be very encouraging, it is, to judge from history, not a hopeless one; the middle class also took time to improve its taste.

Today's mass-produced art has, like all art, an ideological origin and aim, which, thanks to the refinement of modern propaganda methods, it no doubt subserves more successfully than was ever possible before. Yet to maintain that the producers are engaged in a devilish conspiracy against all that is spiritual is a silly example of vulgarized Marxism. The captains of the entertainment industry naturally only want to earn money, choosing for that end bad art rather than good, in the first place because they generally have no notion of the difference, and secondly because bad art is easier to produce and to sell. That is not to say that they take no part in the ideological struggle. We know that ideologies function apart from all intention or consciousness, and that they can be active without there being any conspiracy or definite plan or campaign. But the publishers of best sellers and the film manufacturers of Hollywood are by no means among the most loyal exponents of their class ideology; they might more reasonably be accused of lack-

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ing conviction than of being unbending fanatics. They address themselves to all and sundry, want to satisfy everybody, not to hurt anybody's feelings; they must keep their customers. The ideological principles that they follow are thus rather of a negative than of a positive kind; the essential thing is that certain subjects are not to be treated or even touched upon. These are primarily: healthy sex relations, class war and the workers' movement, any criticism directed against the existing order of society or the authorities, anything involving religious doubts or opposition to the Church. The avoidance of these themes obviously signifies a tacit acceptance of existing conditions, but the positive propaganda, generally speaking, amounts to no more than a somewhat hesitant assurance that this world is the best of all possible worlds.

THE ASSERTION OFTEN MADE that the products of mass culture are put out by the entertainment industry not to satisfy, but to exploit, people's cultural needs is no doubt essentially true; and it is no less true that the poor quality of these products is due to an historical coincidence—of democratization of culture with competitive capitalism. The conclusion, however, which some have thought fit to draw from this critical situation, that "we must remove either exploitation or democracy if culture is to recover its health,"[2] is not convincing. Tension between the spiritual elite and the rest of society is not a phenomenon of today or yesterday; a certain opposition to higher artistic culture has at all times characterized popular art. It would be a utopian dream to expect that this tension should suddenly cease and give birth to a communal art that would interest and satisfy everybody. There are indeed ways and means of raising the level of popular art, and progress in that direction would certainly require sweeping economic and social changes, but not necessarily the disappearance of either capitalism or democracy. The mere abolition of barriers between classes and of external hindrances to the operation of natural selection would scarcely provide any automatic solution of this problem. The hope that the opening of the gates of culture to the people would produce a flood of new talent has not been fulfilled, and is hardly likely to be fulfilled, at least in the way it was formerly conceived.[3] Talented persons do not march through open gates of culture of their own accord; good taste, the power of discriminating good from bad in art and consciously choosing the good, is not something that can be left to the spontaneous feelings, the "uncorrupted" healthy instincts of people, masses, proletariat, or what you will. Good taste is not the root but the fruit of aesthetic culture.

It is therefore but an empty argument to disclaim responsibility for the present state of popular art with the phrase that the public gets what it wants. Public taste is not a primary datum; it is what it has become. It is by no means just the public that decides what it would like; its likes are in part determined by what is offered it. That pattern is of course a circle, but one that can be broken. To break it would,

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however, cost time and money, and as is well known, publishers and film producers are not philanthropists. They are not even, as businessmen go, especially enterprising; mere assurances that education of the public is bound to pay in the long run[4] would not be likely to induce them to risk upsetting a safe market.

II

The history of modern popular art begins about the middle of the nineteenth century with the rise of the idea that art is relaxation, the prevalence of a desire to find in art a means of distraction rather than of concentration, entertainment rather than education or deepened understanding. Before that time there were, as there have always been, more and less successful, more and less ambitious, more and less complex forms of art; but now there emerges for the first time the notion of an art which does not present any difficulties or problems, but is immediately intelligible. Everything comprised today under the headings of "light music," "light reading," "decoration for the home" was before then practically non-existent. Of course, entertaining books were written—often a good deal more entertaining than the books of today—tuneful, rhythmical, easily memorized music was composed, "pretty," agreeable pictures were painted; but their agreeableness was only a by-product, a means to an end, not an end in itself. Art has always wanted to please, usually to entertain as well; but the people to be pleased and the level on which they are to be entertained have varied from time to time.

It has been well said that to feel pleased means "being in accord with the prevailing circumstances."[5] Cervantes, Voltaire, and Swift wrote extremely amusing books, Rubens and Watteau painted pictures that are a sheer treat to the eyes; Mozart composed the most charming music; but it would not have occurred to any of them to turn out works designed to make people blindly contented. The serious side of life, a feeling for the precariousness of human existence was never quite absent from their major work. They amused themselves and others by depicting the strange twists and turns of life without any idea of escaping from reality; they poked fun at the absurdities and the awkward situations one finds in the world, but they never thought of pretending such things did not exist.

However, feeling happy is a relatively harmless way of ignoring or falsifying reality; sentimentality is very much worse. The people who weep most at the fate of the unfortunate hero of romance or film are precisely those who seldom feel any compassion in real life. Sentimentality fulfills essentially a surrogate function of this sort in the life of society. There is no generation so content to wallow in emotional stories and melodramatic situations as one that has been frustrated in the expression of its normal emotional life. Feelings banned from real life, and which in everyday reality wither or degenerate, find a refuge and fulfillment in the sentimental backstairs novel and the operetta.

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The writers of former ages, and especially those of the otherwise sober eighteenth century, by no means despised heart-stirring effects, but they invariably appealed to the reader's reason as well as to his heart, recalling him, often somewhat rudely, from wish-dreams and utopian fantasies to a sense of reality. They were acquainted with and respected the secrets of the heart, they did not make a mystery of them. By contrast, the modern best-seller depicts emotion not as something normal and inevitable, not as a natural and in its way valuable element of human life, balanced by reason and a sense of decency and self-respect, but as something quite exceptional, the outcome of a sort of perpetual crisis, always with a tinge of the solemn, the extravagant, and the morbid. Sentimentality is sentiment repressed. Feelings for which there is no room in the life of society, being something one must not give way to, are exaggerated, over-valued, raised to the level of the ideal and the unreal, divorced from life and from all need to stand the test of time.

THE GREAT ATTRACTION of the successful film and novel of today lies in the escape from reality it offers, through identification of the reader or spectator with the hero. Of course, such identification and vicarious participation in the hero's fate, his struggles and successes, has at all times played an important role in the enjoyment of art; indeed art in general can be described as a satisfaction of man's desire for another self and a better life. Yet never before was there such a blind wallowing in wish-fantasies of that kind as there is today. The first beginnings of this unrestrained self-deception through art go back to the romantics. With them, the identification of the reader with the hero takes a form calculated to eliminate all distinction between poetry and reality, author and public, the personage of fiction and the sympathetic follower of the story. The romantic poet makes the reader his confidant, so that anybody can feel himself to be a part in a way, and sets up between reader and hero a degree of intimacy which allows anybody not only to participate in the hero's fate, but actually to imagine himself in the privileged position of a fictitious character. The reader sees and judges the characters by reference to his own aims, hopes, and interests. He does not merely put himself in their place, he also sees them in situations that are quite inappropriate to them and have meaning only for him. Certainly the heroes of great poetry at all times were in a sense ideal figures, the expression of people's wishes, models to which they looked up, often not without envy; but the reader would never have thought of measuring himself by their standards or of claiming to behave as they did. It was obvious to him from the start that the hero of an epic, a romance, or a tragedy moved in a different circle from his own. But since the romantics, all the bounds that once enclosed that ideal, remote, and forbidden life have been broken down; in the popular literature of today they have vanished so utterly that the modern reader sees the heroes of his favorite novels as no more

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and no less than the fulfillment of his own frustrated or muddled life, the realization of all he has missed.

However, only a very simple psychology would explain this identification entirely in terms of wish-fantasies and wish-fulfillment. Few readers or cinema-goers really hope for a "happy ending" in Hollywood style, though they play with such ideas as a part of their enjoyment. The illegitimate relationship that they develop towards their heroes is one of self-dramatization and self-pity quite as much as self-deception. Usually they do not expect overmuch of life, but they measure their own successes and failures, their own resources and possibilities, by a standard that is fundamentally unreal and unsatisfactory. Self-deceiving romanticism is at the bottom both of the mass-public's optimism and of its pessimism, so that sorrow for all the good things they have irrevocably missed or wasted is as powerful a source of tears shed in the cinema as is the weak hope that perhaps they have not missed everything after all.

The moral harm done by the cinema is a favorite topic of the cultural critics of our day; they are always talking about the bad example the conduct of film heroes sets the ordinary man. They scarcely seem to consider that no bad example is so harmful as the life-fantasy that the hero's romantic fate implants and instils in spectators, who feel that it relieves them of responsibility for the tasks of their own unromantic lives. Madame Bovary is the prototype of the novel-reader who by means of this kind of life-fantasy concludes a comforting, if ultimately untenable, pact with life. She is the classical example of the romantic born too late who claims extraterritoriality in life without having earned it in any way, missing modest happiness through constantly expecting happiness on the grand scale—expecting a first prize that he never draws.

WHICH IS THE LESSER EVIL, to read too much or too little? The answer is not so simple as it appears to the believer in progress. That people read the amount they do is by no means a clear gain. The danger of the insatiable hunger for romance, which today is mainly fed by cinema and radio, first made itself felt at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and was recognized in its full extent by Coleridge.

> For as to the devotees of the circulating libraries, [he writes] I dare not compliment their passtime, or rather kill-time, with the name of reading. Call it rather a sort of beggarly day-dreaming, during which the mind of the dreamer furnishes for itself nothing but laziness, and a little mawkish sensibility . . . We should therefore transfer this species of amusement from the genus reading, to that comprehensive class characterized by the power of reconciling the two contrary yet co-existing propensities of human nature, namely, indulgence of sloth, and hatred of vacancy.[6]

Boredom is a product of our restless, sensation-hungry, urban way of life. The peasant does not feel bored, he goes to sleep—which of course is not necessarily more admirable. But he is at least innocent of that unhealthy dread of doing nothing, that vague urge to do some-

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thing or other which Coleridge refers to and which is unknown outside the atmosphere of the modern big town. The demand for art of the urban masses is just hunger for more raw material, a hunger that must be satisfied in order to prevent from running idle a machine that cannot be stopped. The art that satisfies this hunger is no more than an indifferent fuel, a miserable stop-gap. The feeling that something is wanting may be genuine, but people have no idea what really is wanting. They must read a novel, see a film, hear dance-music, have the wireless singing, crooning or at least humming, because they don't know what else to do with themselves. Well, perhaps they get something out of it; but all that has little to do with the enjoyment of art. With the emergence in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of the modern public, reading, from being a somewhat rare pleasure, became a passion. Only in our own day has the enjoyment of art from being a passion become a mere habit, that is, the satisfaction of a want that one is only aware of when it is *not* being satisfied.

But serious as the situation may be, it is no worse than that in which popular art found itself in former times. Excessive pessimism about the present is usually just the reverse side of an excessively favorable estimation of the past. Obviously the abrupt democratization of culture, the breath-taking speed of technical change, and the ruthless sway of the profit-principle in the field of art have produced phenomena of a novel type; the assertion, however, that there has been nothing in the past at all analogous to our present mass culture rests upon a superficial view of things. Those who lament modern art-production, supposing that there has never been anything comparable with the mechanization and commercialization of our popular art, with its dependence upon the ideology of the ruling class and its evident inferiority to the art of the educated, see the past in too rosy a light. There has always been more than one level of artistic culture, and the wider the social basis of a particular type of art, the greater has always been a risk of its becoming degenerate or altogether dependent upon extraneous interests. Folk art has generally been a poor imitation, and whatever the addition of its own special values, it has seldom been in proportion to the loss of artistic quality suffered in the process. The popular art of the half-educated masses, however, has never possessed any independent value at all; the only function in the evolution of art which it might be said to have fulfilled has been that of providing a counterweight to certain extremely esoteric tendencies.

Popular art and folk art, in spite of their apparent kinship, have scarcely any points of contact. The notion one often encounters that the art of the modern masses is in the main a continuation of the former folk art has no better foundation than the attribute of "popularity" which they both share—though the sense of this word is different in the two cases. Folk art and popular art are, logically speaking, at most coordinate species, deriving from a common origin, but certainly not from one another. Folk art is naive, crude, clumsy and old-fashioned, popular

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art often skillful and technically apt, though vulgar, subject to superficial and rapid transformation but incapable of achieving either more radical change or finer discrimination. Genuine art is used up, disintegrated, and simplified by folk art; it is watered down, botched and bowdlerized by popular art. In former periods the gap that separated the country-folk from the lower strata in the towns was not so great as it is today, so that it is not always clear whether some particular work is a product of the half-educated middle class or the uneducated country-folk; whereas today the art of the urban masses is impossible to confuse with folk art, being utterly incompatible with it. Indeed, nothing is less attractive than folk art to the modern half-educated crowd that apes the ways of life and modes of culture of the upper class; what the educated value and enjoy in folk art escapes the half-educated altogether.

1 Georg Simmel: *Philosophische Kultur.* 1911, p. 34.
2 Dwight Macdonald: "A Theory of 'Popular Culture.'" *Politics.* 1944, p. 23.
3 *Cf.* D. W. Brogan: "The Problem of High Culture." *Diogenes.* No. 5. 1954, pp. 3 ff.
4 G. Seldes: *The Big Audience.* 1950.
5 M. Horkheimer, Th. W. Adorno: *Dialektik der Aufklärung,* 1947, p. 172.
6 Coleridge: *Biographia Literaria,* XXII.

MARCEAU PIVERT

As we go to press, we learn with sorrow of the death of Marceau Pivert on the night of June 2. Marceau Pivert had been ill for many years, but had never ceased his political activity in behalf of French socialism and the left-wing of the SFIO, of which he and his group of friends formed a significant part. It is fitting that the very last article he wrote for his publication, *Correspondance Socialiste,* should have been both an attack on the coming to power of de Gaulle and an expression of faith in the ability of the French people to resist fascism. We salute the memory of a life-long militant and socialist.—THE EDITORS

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1. POLITICS AND "ABUNDANCE"

Norman Birnbaum

The eternalization of the present is a recurrent characteristic of conservative thought: the insistence that what is exhausts what can be. It is striking that this notion should characterize C. A. R. Crosland's *The Future of Socialism,* a systematic attempt to reconsider the politics of the British Labor Party.* But while striking, it is not altogether surprising; the party's very success has brought about an attachment to the current British social system among many Laborites. Crosland makes much of this attachment in his discussion of Labor politics, but his point is not simply a tactical one. He honestly thinks that, on balance, there is more to conserve than to change in contemporary Britain—despite his revulsion from the present British status system. His book, which reflects the political mood of the dominant element in the Labor Party, is a considerable exercise in apologetics, to which an answer in leftist terms is as necessary as it is difficult. But before considering the text, perhaps we can look at the situation which has produced it.

I

The success of the Labor Party, it is said, has both reduced its own militancy and lessened the electorate's readiness to accept critical changes in social and economic structure. This assertion, however, may give the Labor Party too much credit, since its immobility is partly a response to a successful Tory propaganda counter-attack. And the present political atmosphere in Britain (as in America and West Germany) is to some extent dominated by a boom psychology. Not many Britons are willing to look beyond their noses at things other than new houses, television sets, automobiles, and vacations.

The removal of widespread poverty has diminished the socialist commitments of middle-class politicians once afflicted with a bad conscience. And since many trade union leaders are lower middle class in disposition, as are many British workers, prosperity has had similar effects on them. Middle-class socialist conviction, then, has relaxed into the benign and indefinite feeling that justice must be done—accompanied by the comfortable belief that, practically, it has almost all been done already.

Those who, like Crosland, think in these terms, mistake a temporary sort of equilibrium for a long-term trend. That equilibrium has, indeed, been badly shaken since Crosland wrote his book; but then as now it was possible

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to see how much tension lay just beneath the surface.

Prosperity is not the most novel feature of the contemporary British scene; it is the use to which prosperity has been put. Even before the Tory electoral victory of 1951, a singular conservative revival had begun. Political in meaning, and above all in consequences, the revival has not been political in appearance. That, indeed, is its chief political value to the Tories.

The revival has resuscitated status values associated with the prewar English class system. It has succeeded, to a large extent, in making the recent recruits to the upper and middle layers of the new class system into zealous defenders of the older status values —even though they owe their social ascent to the Welfare State. The cult of the monarchy, the hierarchy of honors and titles bestowed by the crown, and the absurd and repulsive sycophancy associated with this cult—these are indispensable to the revival, particularly at the lower levels of the class system. (Intellectuals like Harold Macmillan do not, of course, believe their public statements about the monarchy. And those who say what many think, like the naively honest Tory Lord, Altrincham, or the iconoclastic journalist Malcolm Muggeridge, are ferociously abused.) The mass media propagate as a legitimate image of aspiration a fantastic style of life which appears to combine "gracious living" in a country house with the more sensual delights of the gilded scum of mass society. The royal family, alternately appearing in the country on horseback and mixing with film stars in night clubs, does much to sustain the image. It also, of course, performs a number of undefined—because undefinable—"service" functions and thus reassures the puritanical among the lower middle class that its fun is earned. The workers, and the lower middle classes as well, cannot enjoy any but the vicarious pleasures associated with this image. But their acceptance of it (if for no other reason than the want of alternatives) precludes critical socialist responses.

The Tories have been adept at portraying the Labor Party as the enemy of the good life, as indeed it ought to be if the good life is conceived in this fashion. Crosland, as we shall see, renounces an aggressive socialist cultural policy and thus explicitly attests the extent of the conservative propaganda victory on this score.

THE LIFE STYLES of the workers and the middle classes are beginning to merge, particularly among the young. But at the same time tension between them has heightened, mainly because of middle-class aggression. A disdain for the workers, a belief that they are getting much more than their due, extends upwards from the lower middle classes to the London clubs. Its basis is a classical sort of petty bourgeois resentment, but it has swept up a curious rag-bag of malcontents from most sections of the middle class. There are groups in relative decline, forced to pay taxes at an unprecedented rate, angry at the disappearance of cheap domestic labor and indignant at their own inability to afford what have been called, I believe, the unbought graces of life. There are groups of an ascending sort, anxious to enjoy unimpeded the style of life to which they should like to become accustomed. Resentment alone cannot produce politics, but Crosland ignores the ugly potential in this situation. Some of it was released at the time of Britain's humil-

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iation at Suez but more of it is there, temporarily quiescent. The destruction of the present political equilibrium, which has already begun, may release still more of these forces—particularly since nothing seems able to halt Britain's decline as a world power, a source of personal distress to millions of Britons.

Crosland, however, is so pre-occupied with the boom and its supposed indefinite continuance that he fails to see there may be other analogies for Britain than America. Given more political and economic reverses in England, Weimar Germany might be one. (One of Britain's canniest Scots, Donald MacRae, has suggested that post-1918 France is in fact the best analogy.) But I have said enough to show that there is considerable ground for being less than sanguine about what is going to follow the present unstable equilibrium in British politics.

Meanwhile, with the equilibrium already in dissolution, the intellectuals have made it their business to legitimize it. Professor Harold Laski's successor at The London School of Economics (an institution become compulsively respectable) is Michael Oakeshott, who has been acclaimed for a philosophy of politics the chief point of which is that the best politics consist in doing nothing. Others have been celebrating the era of bureaucracy by explaining that all political problems are administrative ones. Yet others have been reassuring Britain's uneasy elite, sometimes with the aid of American professors, that Plato would be sure to identify it with his philosopher kings. In this atmosphere, protest at anything—except about those who protest at something—is thought to be in the very worst kind of bad taste. An important section of the intelligentsia has declared that we live, if not in the best of possible worlds, then in about the only possible one. And they, at least, aim to enjoy it.

Their enjoyment has been interfered with, however, by others of the intelligentsia. The latter make it a principle to enjoy nothing that delights the yea-sayers. The Angry Young Men are often ostensibly apolitical. But their targets are always on the right: the fetishism of "taste," the exaggerations of status consciousness, the pretensions of what is termed "The Establishment"—that tight network of university officials, clerics, higher civil servants, directors of broadcasting, and miscellaneous busybodies which exerts decisive power over the cultural life of the nation. Crosland, to be fair, criticizes many of the things in British society these literary men dislike. But the temper of his book marks him as, by contrast, a Sober Young Man. And it is the sobriety of acceptance, a reasoned response to what was yesterday the equilibrium in politics.

II

Crosland's basic thesis is that capitalism has had its teeth pulled. "Irreversible" trends make impossible large-scale unemployment, significant cuts in working-class living standards, and the concentration of political power in the hands of a property-owning class. In fact, industrial property is not owned in the traditional sense; it is managed. And the managers are subject to dictation by governments that are themselves dependent upon the votes of a people committed to the maintenance, indeed the extension, of the Welfare State.

Fiscal and budgetary measures, along with a minimum of nationalization

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and a considerable enlargement of the social services, have sufficed—and can suffice in the future—to obtain a roughly just redistribution of income. Trade union organization and the Labor Party, similarly, have effected a redistribution of economic and political power. And the industrial managers and the Conservative leaders generally are enlightened. The former regard themselves as public trustees and do not behave like plutocrats; the latter differ from the Laborites over means, not ends. The trouble with British society—continues Crosland's argument—consists of some remaining structural inequities in the distribution of life chances; it may be a Welfare State but it is not an Opportunity Society.

Along with these inequities Crosland deplores the retention of status attitudes more appropriate to the earlier stages of capitalism than to the Welfare State. This is what he means when he declares: "It is quite consistent to say both that Britain remains to an exceptional degree a 'class society,' and that no ruling class exists in the narrow Marxian or economic sense." Labor policy now, he declares, ought to concentrate on altering these attitudes. This can be done, he insists, without major structural alterations in the class system. The necessary changes have already taken place and "... the intellectual framework within which most pre-war socialist discussion was conducted is growing obsolete, first by the fact that the economy is growing at a rapid pace, and secondly by the fact that we now have a quite different configuration of economic power."

Since the author makes very much of the replacement of owners by managers, it might be supposed that he would extend socialist analysis to the role of the latter, who do have enormous powers. He is certainly aware that bureaucracy is a problem found in all industrial societies. But he declares that

> the issue of managerial and bureaucratic power ... has little to do either with socialism, which historically has been concerned only with the economic power of private business, or with capitalism. It is a political and sociological problem of large scale, which now presents itself as strongly in the state bureaucracy, the Trade Unions, the nationalised industries, and the political parties, as it does in private industry.

All definitions are arbitrary, of course, but Crosland's arbitrariness gives him certain advantages. He supposes that socialism was concerned only with the problem of replacing capitalist property; he ignores—in this connection, at least—the generalized socialist goal of liberation from all the forms of economic domination. But having written the script, he cannot very well criticize the lines of the play. Socialism may have outlived its usefulness, but it has not done so on Crosland's evidence. For the data he adduces to demonstrate the decline of traditional capitalist forms of exploitation show that new and more subtle types of exploitation have succeeded it. The future of socialism, in the West no less than in the eastern European countries, depends upon a solution to the problem of bureaucracy. And precisely on this point Crosland refuses analysis.

Perhaps the reason for the refusal is his apparent conviction that the bureaucratic problem is insoluble. As he seems to imply, the separation of the worker from control of the produc-

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tion process arises "inevitably" from the technical imperatives of industrial organization. He therefore rejects all the proposals for workers' control as impractical. But it should not be thought that his counsel is one of despair. He is quite content to recommend what he terms as "High Level Industrial Democracy." What this can mean without a substantial degree of workers' control, it is hard to see.

In this context, Crosland's conception of socialism is worth repeating:

> First, a protest against the material poverty and physical squalor which capitalism produced. Secondly, a concern for 'social welfare,' for the interests of those in need, or oppressed, or unfortunate . . . Thirdly, a belief in equality and the 'classless society,' and especially a desire to give the worker his 'just' rights and a responsible status at work. Fourthly, a rejection of competitive antagonism, and an ideal of fraternity and cooperation. Fifthly, a protest against the inefficiencies of capitalism as an economic system, and notably its tendency to mass unemployment.

Now some of these formulations are liberal rather than (or as well as) socialist. The third and fourth points are more specifically socialist; but it is precisely these that Crosland holds incapable of realization. His socialism thus comes to a defense of a Welfare State organized on liberal political principles; he does not think that social institutions can be given a specifically socialist content. And this view is the source not only of his reluctance to consider fundamental alterations of British society; it leads him to misinterpret the current scene: he ignores the ways in which the original liberal responses no longer fit a bureaucratized society.

Let us take as an instance of Crosland's thought his approach to the problem of socialist transformation of human nature. We cannot tax him with ignoring the problem. He seems to have read somewhat in the literature of neo-Freudianism, and in social anthropology. Some may take it as a commentary on this literature that he concludes, pessimistically, that there are no institutional means by which human nature can be changed. Of the ideal of cooperation he says that it is "impossible to reach a definite conclusion about its relevance to contemporary conditions." He is thrown back on the notion that socialists ought to aim at enlarging the area of free personal choice. But the choices he cites suggest that he assumes that men are genuinely free in our type of society. He writes of British workers, undertaking cruelly long hours at the workbench in order to pay for consumer durable goods, and he does not stop to analyze the way in which they have assimilated middle-class consumption values. These questions become particularly acute in connection with his views on a socialist cultural policy. But Crosland's entrapment in a classical dilemma is most evident in his proposals for the reshaping of British society.

I have said that he wishes to leave social structure essentially intact, in its present form. That is correct; but this too requires energy. He introduces his proposals with the claim that "the levelling process is a reality even in terms of consumption standards; and Britain has an appreciably more equal society after six years of Labor rule either than it had before the war, or than it would otherwise have had." Turning to industrial organization, he declares the extension of state controls "a tiresome and unnecessary nuisance" —a view incorporated in the Labor

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Party's subsequent document, *Industry and Society,* which calls for passive government shareholding in private enterprises. Rejecting worker participation in management, he is in favor of an extension of the scope of trade union consultation with management, on the American model. (Here again, he accepts the present structure of motives as a universal one: he believes that workers will not wish to double as managers.) The experience of the nationalized industries, to which he continually refers, was depressing; but these attempted few experiments in new forms of worker participation—and invariably left the former managers in charge. *His proposals for "high level industrial democracy," then, simply entail a certain widening of the scope of the bureaucratic control structures now dominating our lives.*

III

Crosland also devotes much attention to the class structure. But when he writes of the class structure, he refers mainly to the status system in Britain, which he so dislikes. His aim is to make of Britain a middle class society, of the American type. American status attitudes might or might not be preferable to the combination of petty bourgeois snobbery and pseudo-aristocratic arrogance manifested by various sections of the British middle classes —but it would not be socialism.

Crosland holds that

> any society must have some structure of conventional and accepted rankings. It is conceivable that such a status hierarchy might be as rigid and unequal as the class hierarchy which it supersedes. This is perhaps unlikely in practice; it is hard to believe that the disappearance of broad class demarcations, and their replacement by a continuous series of status gradations, would not diminish social inequality.

Crosland is here clearly talking of "social inequality" in terms of parity, or near parity, of prestige and esteem. He confuses the term "class," which generally refers to strata differentiated by objective criteria, with status groupings. But his confusion is not simply verbal. Since he proposes to do nothing to diminish the power of the present British elite, or of the sycophant strata clinging to it, it is quite impossible to see how they are to be deprived of their attitudes of superiority. In any case, social superordination and subordination do not rest merely on "attitudes"; they rest on quite tangible things like power and wealth. Crosland's remedy for snobbishness in Britain is to increase the rate of upward social mobility, despite the fact that there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that the rate differs from that in the U.S. And he makes no suggestions for dealing with the resistance of presently favored British groups to this proposal. The pursuit of status in the United States is in fact the pursuit of the tangible advantages of higher class position, which in turn confer status. And while Crosland recommends upon his fellow countrymen adoption of American attitudes toward social status, he hardly discusses the American class system underlying these attitudes—and at times, possibly, obscured by them. Crosland's image of America is somewhat idealized. The American social system is by no means as open as Crosland thinks—although it would be absurd to deny that in some respects it is psychologically more tolerable than the British one.

Crosland's proposals for educational reform again show his reluctance to

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think of major alterations in social structure. Like most Laborites, he deplores Britain's hopelessly confused and unjust educational system which functions on three levels: one for the elite, another for the middle classes, and a third for the workers. He thinks it possible to convert elite schools into democratic institutions; but how this is to be done without an attack on the elite is unimaginable. His warnings against proceeding to a "drab extreme" of egalitarianism might be appropriate had he envisaged anything radically egalitarian. In this context, it seems gratuitous.

Crosland's cultural politics show many of the tendencies of his other positions. He is in favor of a higher culture; who is not? But in warning against "paternalism" with respect to a cultural policy, he accepts as fixed the present distribution of cultural values in the population. He says nothing of the education—if that be the term—of the workers by their middle-class teachers in command positions on magazines, newspapers, radio and television. He does not even consider the question of the atomization, purposelessness, and degradation of our lives.

Crosland's arguments against too much interference with the social structure tell us a good deal about his mode of thought. Opposing the confiscation of property, he writes:

> All large fortunes and estates would be suddenly destroyed, and the whole of the propertied classes (and more especially the settled landed classes—the financial classes would no doubt find a means of partial escape) would find themselves catapulted into a state of considerable confusion, with quite unpredictable social results.

The British landed classes and the financial ones are not quite as distinct as this phrasing would lead us to suppose, and it is amusing to find Crosland afraid that property would pass from "stable established families" to "nouveau riche speculators" as well as the state. I do not know whether Crosland has read much in conservative social philosophy, but the position is clear:

> The fact is that a society like ours is an organic unity—a "going concern" in Mackinder's phrase, and one so highly organised and interdependent between its various parts, resting as it does on a balance of tensions, thrusts and stresses, that intervention at one point will have effects at numerous and often unexpected other points. One therefore cannot give it a shock of more than a certain violence without the risk of damage to the entire structure . . . one should never monkey about with society too much; if we do, we may find that history has some unpleasant surprises up its sleeves for us.

What the Croslands do not see, of course, is that our societies are already in acute convulsion—and we had the right to expect something better, by way of an answer, from a comrade. His sanguine belief that Britain (and the West) are now moving into an era of abundance may or may not be correct; what is disheartening is his acceptance of conventional notions of abundance. I have used the notion of a managerial elite as a new exploiting and ruling class in this discussion; the idea is most unclear (only Mills has done something to clarify it) and I should not wish it thought that I supposed we have the answer. But if socialism entails only a genteel knock at the door of these, our rulers, then a great tradition is in colossal disrepair.

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2. LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL POLICY

Kurt L. Shell

The main question Mr. Rogow* sets out to answer is whether the British Labor Party, when in power, was able to influence significantly the structure, psychology, and objectives of British industry. The author has selected an area for analysis in which performance, I believe by necessity, was bound to fall far short of the socialist goal. This appears to me due to the fact that there never existed a clear-cut socialist industrial policy; or that, if it existed, it was increasingly recognized as conflicting with other (and profounder) goals.

Socialism in industry had traditionally been associated with higher wages, workers' participation, more efficient use of productive resources, public ownership and central planning. The dilemma which emerged when the Labor Government attempted to implement these multiple goals rested on the apparent impossibility of combining high productivity (industrial efficiency) and high wages on one hand with workers' control (or extensive participation) on the other; on the impossibility of engaging in extensive central planning without creating a massive bureaucracy.

Mr. Rogow analyzes carefully the (largely successful) resistance of the spokesmen for private industry to inroads by public authority on their managerial sphere of action. Valuable as his analysis is, it misses the more fundamental point in explaining the lagging impetus and enthusiasm which the Labor Government (and Party) has shown since 1950. The paralysis of will originated primarily within the ranks of Labor itself and it was based on the loss of the original innocent assurance that in public ownership and planning were to be found the keys to economic abundance, "socialist" freedom, a "new social ethic."

If it could be shown—and by 1950 it largely had—that nationalization was not inherently more efficient than private ownership under public supervision (as in the British steel industry); that workers' participation was as difficult in public as in private enterprises, and that the imperatives of large-scale industrial production (involving managerial authority, wage differentials, and monetary incentives) prevented any fundamental transformation of bourgeois values, where then was the urgent impetus for further nationalization to come from? It is my conviction that, had the Labor Government been able to make out a convincing case for further nationalization—convincing primarily to its own adherents—by pointing either to increased efficiency or to the requirements of social justice, it would

* *The Labor Government and British Industry*, 1945-1951, by A. A. Rogow (with the assistance of Peter Shore). Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, N.Y. 196 pp. $3.

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have been able to overcome the resistance of its opponents and to obtain the (more or less reluctant) cooperation of the managerial strata which, Mr. Rogow admits, it needed for implementing the transfer to public ownership.

The author repeatedly criticizes the Labor Government for failing to educate and train proletarian and socialist replacements for bourgeois managers. I believe this emphasis misplaced (except with regard to the broader issue of equality of opportunity for persons of working-class background). For, if public enterprises are to be run on the basis of business principles—and the Labor Government was committed to this proposition—there is no evidence that managers of working class background will function in a significantly different manner from their bourgeois colleagues.

SIMILARLY the criticism implicit in Mr. Rogow's conclusion that the British Labor Government did not have a comprehensive production plan, if by plan is meant "a set of economic objectives, integrated and consistent in their assumptions which the Government has decided to carry out," appears to me uncalled for. In the first place, the author himself approvingly quotes E. H. Carr's statement that neither historically nor ideologically does any necessary connection exist between socialism and the concept of central planning. In the second place Mr. Rogow admits—but does not further consider—the enormous burden of bureaucratic detail which a tightly administered economic system entails. Thirdly, Mr. Rogow talks too lightly, in my view, of the replacement of market forces by political planning decisions; but is disturbed when political planning decisions turn out, in practice, to be the result of departmental pulling and hauling instead of the expert long-range plan which he evidently yearns for. In the light of Britain's overwhelming need to push exports into a volatile world market, one must wonder whether a long-range plan could ever have possessed the required suppleness.

Furthermore, Mr. Rogow apparently fails to consider the difference in planning approaches indicated for industrially highly developed economies. In the Soviet Union, in China and India, the goal of industrialization is overarching, and thus prescribes the basic pattern of priorities. Where in Britain long-run industrial needs were obvious, long-range planning—as in the coal industry—was undertaken. But when a country like Britain already possesses a well-equipped industrial apparatus, when its economy is dependent on numerous foreign markets, what criteria—once the more obvious demands for modernization and re-equipment have been met—could expert planners devise besides attempting to *anticipate* international market developments? The vast number of economic decisions regarding "allocation of scarce resources," if they are not made by market forces, must be made politically; and no regime really has a set of detailed criteria worked out which will permit it (in the absence of some overwhelming imperative such as war) to make these decisions continuously and consistently.

IF MY LINE of reasoning is accepted, then another aspect of the Labor Government's industrial policy which Mr. Rogow views with grave apprehen-

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sion, becomes understandable, even inevitable. I am referring to the extensive use made of industrialists to administer controls—in official or semi-official capacity—over their own industries. What were the alternatives? Total nationalization? Rejected (rightly or wrongly) because of unwieldiness, excessive bureaucratization. Extensive governmental control by civil servants? The result would have been magnification of government bureaucracies and the shift of emphasis from cooperation to attempts at playing "cops and robbers," with private industrialists constantly attempting to deceive the supervisors and to circumvent controls.

True, the device adopted by the Labor Government (as well as by NIRA, the Nazi regime, and the U.S. Government during World War II) obviously fosters cartellization and thus runs counter to the professed commitment to maximum competition in the private sector of the economy (in any case, a strange and paradoxical commitment for socialists). It also harbors the danger of subordinating the public interest to private capitalist advantage. I wonder, however, whether the latter danger is not, to some extent, more theoretical than practical. The controllers operate within the framework of law and over-all governmental supervision. Within that framework, however, they are merely expected to be good businessmen and to act fairly toward their industries; something which comes naturally to them as they mostly represent the cartellizing trade associations. By and large, these businessmen accepted the role assigned to them in a spirit of honesty and cooperation. Where they could not do so, they resigned their posts or refused to accept them in the first place. Is it really so puzzling as Mr. Rogow finds it that the Labor Government—even the redoubtable Sir Stafford Cripps—preferred this approach of controlling the private sector to the exclusively governmental-bureaucratic one? If a socialist government accepts the survival—the permanent survival—of a large area of private enterprise, it is surely an advantage to gain the cooperation of the leading private managers in rendering this sector broadly responsive to public policy.

By dissenting from some of Mr. Rogow's major critical conclusions I do not wish to suggest that many of his observations are not fully supported and justified. He has a sharp eye for the basic problems faced by the Labor Government and a special knack for summarizing complex sets of data. And while I have taken exception to his slighting the disadvantages and difficulties of his suggested alternatives to Labor policies, I must sorrowfully concur with the major conclusion he states in his final chapter entitled "Politics of Stalemate." He finds that the policies and balance established under the Labor Government broadly satisfy both the significant power groups as well as the masses of British society. The welfare state devised by the Labor Government permits, in the author's words, "class rule" and "mass contentment" to co-exist. And as long as this mass contentment is maintained through full employment and rising consumption levels among the working class the decisive shift in the morals and values of society which represents the true core of the socialist revolution must remain the dream of a small minority rather than become the shared impetus to mass action.

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NOTES ON SOCIALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Norman Thomas

In no sense do these notes pretend to the blessed adjective "definitive." They are based on impressions derived from observations, conversations, interviews, meetings, and a little reading during a six weeks' trip in Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Israel. I went abroad to listen rather than to speak, but before I came home I had spoken and been questioned at public student meetings in the American universities in Cairo and Beirut, at off-record conferences first with Arab and then Jewish students at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, at a radical "opposition" Arab club in Lebanon and at an informal meeting under Baath—the Socialist Party of Syria presided over by that excellent man, Salah el-Bitar. Moreover, I had listened to an hour's lecture on Arab socialism by one of Beirut's leading intellectuals. And I had had interviews with officials, opposition leaders and plain people too numerous to record.

As a result I cannot form or impart a clear picture of socialism in the Middle East—certainly not a socialism with a platform on which Arab and Israeli socialists could unite. In both cases the nationalist adjective is more important than the socialist noun. (In what nation, by the way, cannot a similar statement be made?) Everywhere as we talked about socialism or communism, I was aware of the vast difference in the climate and nature of such discussions from the hot debates of the years following World War I in our Western world.

I

Let's begin with Middle Eastern—and Asian—communism. I should argue that communism generally has become a special form of state capitalism. But its origins were Marxist and socialist and it is still so regarded in the East. In the countries I visited communism has varying degrees of strength. It tries to go to the workers or the people in countries where a working class in our Western sense is just emerging. But nowhere is it imitating Mao's approach in China—at least not with any obvious success. Its public slogans are reformist and ultra nationalist, and it is pathetically dependent on Moscow.

In Syria where the party led by Bogdash has had some strength it had to swallow the Kremlin's loan agreement with that supreme opportunist, Minister of Defense el-Azim, the great landowner, nicknamed the Red Millionaire, who assured a businessmen's convention that Mos-

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cow was now anti-communist. Had it not made an agreement with him that would raise living standards and so destroy communism? At this there was some revolt in the Syrian party, how serious depends upon your informant, but it was put down by Bogdash and the party continues its appeal as even more devotedly pan-Arabist than its rivals.

Indeed, except for a few hard core Communists, everywhere that I have been from Indonesia to Egypt, communism in the East has to many people an almost mystical appeal as a short cut whereby the supposedly "spiritual" East can quickly acquire the material wealth of the West and in the process thumb its nose at its former masters, the "democratic" nations of Western Europe. In countries where there has never been political democracy or a tradition of individual rather than group freedom it is comparatively a matter of indifference that on the road to power a Stalin or a Mao has found so many millions of human beings expendable.

This does not mean that the Middle East is or desires to be under communist control. Definitely the socialists like the Baath party in Syria don't want that. They do have some aspirations for democracy. In Syria and Lebanon they are the chief obstacles to communism's spread among the people. As for your el-Azims, of course they don't want communism. They merely think, with sublime disregard of history, that they can outsmart Big Brother Khrushchev, their champion against a Western imperialism of which an expansionist Israel is the wedge to divide Arabian brothers. (This view of Israel with America behind her, an America controlled by Zionists, is almost universal in the Middle East, though it is less strong among socialists in Syria and Lebanon than among most non-socialists.)

II

In contrast to the communists, socialists, at least those who are articulate, have some suspicion of Moscow and some regard for democracy. But, as with all other Arabs, their main passion is nationalism or rather pan-Arabism. To this emancipating movement they will provide, as others, they believe, cannot, such true inspiration and guidance that it will be a blessing not only to Arabs but mankind. Their nationalism, they insist, is to be distinguished from the nationalisms of the West which in combination with capitalism have led to imperialism. As far as I could learn they have a not too well developed welfare and pro-labor program with some degree of interest in land reform. Their emphasis, however, is on production and, as one of them explained, in their class struggle the good capitalist who invests and manages so as to increase production can be their ally against the bad.

Some of the most devoted pan-Arabist socialists are, nominally, Christians, but by no means all Christians are sure that pan-Arabism is a secular entity independent of Islam. This fact came out in private conversations in Lebanon and Israel with Arabs. Lebanon itself is deliberately organized to preserve a balance between religions. Some

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Lebanese Christians are passionate pan-Arabists; more, I think, are privately if not publicly cautious. Jumblatt, leader of the principal socialist party, from which, since his defeat for parliament, there have been defections, owed much of his political strength to the fact that he, by family position, is a leader of the Druse religious minority.

In Egypt the religious factor was illustrated by a personal experience. A socialist intellectual, a Copt, was telling Dr. Don Peretz and myself that there was now rather serious popular rather than governmental discrimination against Copts. Dr. Peretz reminded him that he had denied this emphatically when he had talked with him some months earlier. "Of course," he replied. "You were with a Moslem." And this Moslem was his friend and socialist comrade!

Socialism in Egypt, or more precisely Nasser's idea of it, has become more important since our return to the United States—and since this article was first written. When we were in Egypt, Nasser had expressed a hope that his National Union—which in some sense is to take the place of the political parties no longer allowed to function as such—would be democratic socialist in point of view. I questioned the President about his understanding of democratic socialism and got no very clear answer. He assured me of his continuing interest in improving the conditions of the Egyptian people. He is clearly an advocate of the welfare state, but said that he could not use as much money for schools as he would like. It is a necessity if Egypt is to provide any kind of life for a population growing at the rate of 500,000 a year that her economy be industrialized. And that takes money, much of which the government must provide. Therefore, the government, for example, had put money into the new steel plant. In such cases, it exacts representation on the board of directors, roughly in proportion to what it puts in, and of course it claims the right, in a general sort of way, to direct the whole economy.

I asked the President why he banned parties, including the Socialist party. His reply was that when he took over the government of Egypt he was appalled at the corruption of political parties and their furious partisanship. To deal with that evil, his government had banned parties on the electoral front, but had not suppressed the expression of political ideas. It is true, as he reminded me, that last summer there were hot campaigns between individuals in different parliamentary constituencies. And at the very time of our visit the Egyptian parliament was showing considerable independence in inquiring into allegations of wasteful management in the so-called "liberation" province—an area which had been set aside for agricultural development along semi-collectivist lines under state direction. The National Union, as nearly as I could gather, is open to all Egyptians, and has no binding creed except "loyalty." It serves as an agency to certify the loyalty of the contending candidates in various elections.

Nasser has carried over his opposition to political parties in the provisional rules governing the United Arab Republic. That excellent man, Salah el-Bitar, a leader of the Baath Party and foreign minister

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in the Syrian coalition cabinet, appears to have been the man above all others who brought negotiations for unity between Egypt and Syria to a more rapid consummation than was generally expected. But Mr. Bitar apparently has not saved the Baath Party from dissolution. So far letters that I have written to Arab friends on their plans for continuing the work of the Baath Party have been unanswered. But Bitar's work resulted in the exclusion of the dangerous el-Azam from Nasser's provisional cabinet. This anti-American now lives in what is sometimes called the American section of Beirut. And our friend, Bitar, is in the cabinet—a fact which gives me hope for the future.

III

In Israel socialism is Western in origin and outlook. Israel has three socialist parties of this Western type and under proportional representation they function not only in the state but in the powerful labor organization, the Histadrut. Socialist kibbutzim or non-religious agricultural collective communities are usually pretty well tied to one or another of these parties. Mapam is the most Marxist or least non-Marxist of these parties. By now it is definitely non-communist though like most Asian socialists it thinks pretty well of the Yugoslavs. Apparently its members on principle don't wear neckties, which to the visitor chiefly distinguishes them from Mapai. Otherwise such differences as there are are rooted at least as much in Israeli history and attitudes toward Zionism as in socialist doctrine.

In action Israeli socialism in the state and in the Histadrut is very pragmatic. Given the peculiar circumstances of the formation of little Israel the Histadrut has done a remarkable job. It may, as its leaders hope, suggest similar action in small new nations like Ghana. But this labor state within a state is hardly the answer to the need for socialist forms of organization in the struggle against bureaucratic controls. Even in Israel the fact that all workers belong to, and can vote in, the central organization which itself owns many of the industries in which they must work does not solve the problems of the relation of management and workers. And I for one would not want political parties to function formally in American labor unions.

As for the kibbutzim they have served Israel well. When men and women love them and work in them as Joseph Baratz worked in the kibbutz which he so charmingly describes in his *Village by the Jordan,* they are an asset to humanity. But only if they are the voluntary choice of their members who are inspired by a common idealism. Otherwise they would be, as certain Polish immigrants have said they feared, very like Russian kolkhozes in their pressure on individuals. Some American religious agricultural communities did very well for one, two or three generations while the religious bond held them. But that did not prove indefinitely communicable. Will the secular idealism of the socialist kibbutz fare better? Even now the growing form of agricultural settlement is the much looser cooperative or moshav.

As for international affairs the foreign policy of Israel has been

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made by Ben Gurion and his comrades of Mapai with pretty general support of a Zionist nationalist movement. The result is the establishment of a national enclave in an unfriendly Arab world. There can be no inherent socialist internationalism in the process of achieving or maintaining such an enclave. It is fair to add that Israeli socialists do keep, like Western socialists, some international conscience and desire for international federation. So do Arab socialists—except when they think of Israel. And even then there is a chance that this Asian socialist federation may serve as provider of a meeting ground, if not as a mediator, for the comrades in the whole Middle East.

IV

Lest to any reader what I have written should seem censorious to a degree unwarranted by any achievement of Western international socialism, I hasten to admit that it is not only Arab socialism or Israeli socialism but democratic socialism everywhere which is pretty well bound by the spirit and the institutions of the various nations within which it works. Its program in today's world cannot be simply derived from Marx or any of its great teachers. It cannot count to the degree that they did on human rationality. Men, groups and classes cherish their prejudices at least as much as they cherish their economic interests to which those prejudices frequently run counter. There is no economic formula which will lead to utopia, important as are economic arrangements in men's striving for plenty, peace, freedom and that fraternity which must be the spiritual basis for the good society of our dreams. Of these facts and the history of the years since socialism failed to stop or effectively to protest World War I, today's socialism in every continent must take full account.

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Though written independently of each other, and obviously not intended as a debate between the authors, the two articles that follow may be said to represent opposing views of the Egyptian, or Arab, intellectual, Nasser, and so forth. Georges Ketman is a native of Egypt who is now an Israeli citizen. His article first appeared in the French journal Preuves, *and is reprinted here with the kind permission of the editor and the author; a few abridgements have been made. Tahseen M. Basheer is an Egyptian journalist now living in the United States. This is his first appearance in* DISSENT.—THE EDITORS

PAPERS AND BEANS:

A Portrait of the Egyptian Intelligentsia

Georges Ketman

Even a few months ago, a foreign intellectual passing through Cairo and interested in meeting the city's intellectuals, would have been introduced to people whom the war at one stroke deprived of all meaning to the country. Ten to one, they would have been members of minorities, Copts, Jews or Lebanese, in Egypt for less than a century; or very likely they would have belonged to one of those hybrid groups designated pejoratively in Arab slang as "Bazramites." Sallow, sunburned or pale, with that weary and ivory-like pallor which is seen in the East, they, or the majority of them, would have spoken an exquisite French (taught by the Jesuit fathers of Faggalah) or a remarkably Oxfordian English (acquired, no doubt, in the black province of Assiout from British governesses). One would have found them up on international politics, readers of *Foreign Affairs* or *Botteghe Oscure,* people who had assimilated authors as unlike as Marx, Heidegger and Sterner, and people, by the way, who had read Hallaj and Djabarti, which is something not so common. One would have found among them—if one had visited Egypt in more serene and democratic epochs —a Georges Henein, a Mounir Hafez, a Magdi Wahba, a Loutfallah Soliman or an Ali El Chalakini.*

* *Georges Henein*—former member of the French Surrealist movement; son of an Egyptian ambassador. *Mounir Hafez*—a writer who specializes in the study of Moslem and Hindu mysticism. *Magdi Wahba*—wealthy Egyptian; Oxford-education; particularly interested in the status of religious minorities in the Orient. *Loutfallah Soliman*—publisher and bookseller; his broad political culture and independent progressivism have given him high standing among many Egyptian professors and journalists. *Ali El Chalakani*—lawyer and journalist.

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These denizens of a new St. Petersburg claimed to be capable of something more than the assimilation of new ideas developed elsewhere. During the first years of World War II, for example, Georges Henein, an exceptionally gifted poet and the friend of André Breton, launched a newspaper in Arabic, *Al Tattauvor,* in which communism and surrealism were the dominant tendencies. A surrealist movement at that time brought together all those whom Egypt, rich in refugee intellectuals, considered the best artists and writers to be found there. It is true that, except for those we cited above, plus Cossery, none of the talents which developed in this hot-house atmosphere (where the most inspired wrote revolutionary verses or went to prison with equal zeal) survived the break-up of this circle. The blaze had been superficial. Economic matters, the deadly peace and daily life had doused it with cold water.

Later, a periodical appearing only occasionally, and entitled *From the Sands,* tried to connect the survivors of the former epoch and certain western philosophers, Jean Grenier, Jean Wahl, Henri Michau, and Ponge for instance. The review published three issues devoted to commemorations, one to Nietzsche, one to Kafka and the third to Kierkegaard. It was then, in the light of political events, that the real flaw which had inspired the editing of the review showed itself: artificiality. Published by a very restricted group, and intended surely for no more than a *happy few,* these anniversary issues corresponded to no necessity and were addressed to no definite public. As for relevance and topicality: while these writings were provocative in the extreme, after all, they were edited in a foreign language by former feudal lords or pseudo-Europeans who could scarcely hide their dread of a future marred by a growing nationalist movement.

These intellectual editors exhibited a marked unconsciousness of class, and of the death-throes of the class to which they belonged. Heedless of the gigantic political and social metamorphosis which had begun right before their eyes, which surely heralded if not their physical extermination then certainly their moral and economic decline, they hoped to perpetuate the Alexandrian elites of twenty centuries ago. But they forgot that if the mixed colonies of the sixth century spoke Alexandrian Greek, this was because that language was commonly spoken in the Eastern Mediterranean; they forgot, likewise, that cosmopolitanism flourishes only in the shade of powerful empires, and that Islam is essentially xenophobic. And finally they did not seem to recognize that their metaphysical preoccupations, their literary analyses of dandyism, of Julian the Apostate and of the Sephiroths, when addressed to a largely analphabetic nation (eighty per cent), was a scandalous, if seductive, paradox.

Then the veil was rent; the trend of revolutionary Egyptian politics made it necessary for them to choose between Egypt and the West. Some of them expatriated themselves to Europe; some, however, remained in their quite exceptional position until the Suez crisis, in the

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very geographic and moral region where the East and West faced each other. That guilty conscience of the West which condemns colonialism, which hailed the liquidation of the war in Indo-China and today calls for the French to quit North Africa, afforded these Mandarins the line they were looking for. The positions taken by a François Mauriac and a Jean-Paul Sartre, the articles in *France Observateur* and in *Les Temps Modernes,* strengthened their conviction that they had found a basis for maintaining connections with the West. The independent French left recalled to them their first zealous support of Communism, in the days when they learned by heart the words of the "Internationale" and sold rugs and family jewels to buy Marxist books. These sons of Farouk's ambassadors, of big landed proprietors, of Wafdist deputies, of makers of fashionable clothes for the upper classes, declared themselves leftist; but they did so in French, a language under official ban, characterized as belonging to parasites whose domination the revolution had brought to an end.

They declared themselves for the left; yet Nasser's republic forbade them practically any kind of political activity, threatened them with new nationalizations, cut up the golf courses of their clubs and sold at auction the collections of the royal family—that very family whose salons they had frequented, whose princes, friends of their fathers, had some time before been exiled by the British, and with whom they were still, in a way, allied; no, Kropotkin is not an exclusively Russian phenomenon. It must be admitted, however, that such a way of life was led by a very few; like the famous ten little Indians, this intelligentsia soon became reduced. Today, it numbers only two or three survivors, individuals who speak Arabic without self-consciousness and whose Communist convictions were able to find some echo, and may again find one, in Egyptian politics.

II

It may be asked, if no one has replaced this elite, then is Egypt a land without intellectuals?

A round No would not be a precise answer. There are in Cairo individuals sufficiently like those one generally considers representative of an intelligentsia, and these persons are not cosmopolites without futures. They came up during the last three or four years, and one had to have a certain naivete not to notice the perspectives which have since opened to them. Really, one had to be even blinder than Taha Hussein* to explain only by personal or base reasons the anti-French measures he took well before the Nasser revolution in his capacity as Minister of Public Education. These measures already showed the importance of the nationalist movement which shook the last years of the old regime, and within which a new intelligentsia was formed from the meetings of students and their street demonstrations.

* Major literary figure of contemporary Arab letters; a Goethian figure, friend of Andre Gide; candidate for the Nobel Prize (which he deserves!).

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Unlike their predecessors, the representatives of the new intelligentsia are very seldom polyglots; they have read little—bad translations of Dostoievsky and Sartre; they are badly dressed, they do not wear eyeglasses; they have suffered from hunger. Almost all have been or are in journalism; some do scenarios for the screen.

The chief characteristic of these new intellectuals is their lack of culture. To read a lot one must have leisure and money, for in Cairo foreign books often cost twice their original price; now these Egyptians have little leisure and almost no money. Moreover, there are few translations in Arabic of the masterworks of world thought and literature; most of what is to be found is badly translated.

Finally, for the Eastern intellectual, culture, in the Occidental sense, is the crowning glory of rich classes whose progress has come to an end; culture is the banner carried by those who "do not participate." It can be stated without fear of contradiction that the number of Egyptian students or university people who have read Plato or Goethe is indeed exceeding small. One should not be surprised that the most enlightened intellectuals know Gide, Huxley and Faulkner by name only.

If they are badly dressed—for the most part in soft colors, the pink-browns and dark-greens favored by the Eastern petty-bourgeois of peasant stock—if they do not wear eyeglasses, it is because they are almost all of peasant origin and the eyesight of the Egyptian peasant is quite up to the virulence of the diseases likely to assail him; most keep their sight through life.

Sons of peasants or of poverty-stricken functionaries, they have known what it means to suffer from hunger. This explains in large part their social ideas and their attitude to those Egyptians who went to Europe to take the cure, and who were the exploiters of their parents.

Today, even under a regime which asks for their support, they do not earn more than just enough to dine on a tiny bit of meat in a stew, or on beans and salad. Their lack of money is something almost metaphysical; to use an expression of Cossery, they are "the eternally barking dogs in the best of worlds." Their unique authority does not come from their situation as "brain workers"—for this category is not much appreciated in the East, where only the poet and the journalist enjoy any prestige—but from the fact that their social condition is the same as that of the greater number of officers in the new regime.

Here a semantic clarification becomes necessary. In the West, the term "intellectual" is used to designate a person capable of dealing with general problems and resolving them from some original standpoint. No such capacity is to be discerned in the members of the intelligentsia of Cairo. The essay is for them a difficult, thankless, and even foreign form of expression; the newspaper articles which deal, for instance, with the influence of Western culture on Egyptian students —one of the most difficult subjects a nationalist journalist could treat of, considering his own meager knowledge and the level of his six hundred thousand readers—such articles are seldom more than wearisome

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collections of commonplaces and anecdotes brought in without relevance. One of the rarest theoreticians of the new regime, and perhaps the only one who has thought broadly of the problems of a modern Egypt is—Gamal Abdel Nasser!

III

This lack of real intellectuals is due to the nature of the problems which dominate modern Egypt. The principal cause, though, is the absence of any real Arabic literature other than religious or scientific texts. (Can one consider as literature the notebooks—like da Vinci's—of an Ibn Sina or Avicenna?) *The Thousand and One Nights* are an exception, of course, but not enough to base a literature on; the poets of Islam are only lyrical sensualists; and neither the Sufi texts nor the Koran, which is the principal literary work of Islam, suffice for an intrinsically Eastern evaluation of the problems of the modern world. The frightful gap which separates the birth of Islam from the rebirth of contemporary Egypt dooms every velleity of specifically Arabic thought. The Westerner with even a faulty education probably knows that the inventor of the electronic brain was—if one goes back to the beginning—a tormented religious thinker named Pascal, and that the automobile had been foreseen by Leonardo da Vinci. Between the camel and the cadillac there is a distance which the Egyptian is simply too ignorant to cross. The great weakness of Islam in the modern world lies in its inability to master language and technique. When one knows the links uniting philosophy and sociology to technics one better understands why the Egyptian elite remains vassalized by the West. It would be astonishing if they were not, when you consider that the religious organization of Moslem Brothers still considers elevators and autos instruments of the devil, and rejects all banking as impious in principle.

Another reason for the poverty of Egyptian thought lies in the rigidity of the Arabic language. Arabic is a language designed for the meditation and recitation of the Koran.

The poverty of this language which, moreover, is most imprecise, as are all languages forged by poets and preachers, is maintained by the intransigence of the *Azhar,* the religious university and the Sorbonne of all Islam, toward any projected reform. Proclaiming in his constitution that Egypt is a Moslem state, and thus showing scorn for the three million Copts who still consider themselves the original inhabitants of the land, Nasser linked himself to the *Azhar.* Here one can see how precarious is the influence exerted by the intellectuals; for what they want is change, for instance the total secularization of the state, and even the adoption of the Latin alphabet following the example of Turkey.

The only chance for development the Egyptian intelligentsia has lies in its total atheism; this alone is able to break up the archaic social structure, a vestige of Ottoman domination and a feudal society which

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until the recent months was, into the bargain, scandalously plutocratic. Atheism is widespread among the young college students and the small bureaucrats, to whom, for good or evil—the latter most often—the years of revolutionary government have given a political consciousness. These two social groups, from which the new intellectuals are recruited, consider all the politics up to the revolution with indifference, or more often with cynicism; their main concern is to line up in some faction of the party in power and get better posts; afternoons in the café, hashish and films fill up leisure time; and *Rose El Youssef,* the crypto-Communist weekly which is read by the whole left now, publishes nothing but sophisticated gossip.

The principal resource of these people, almost as barren of culture as they are lacking in money, is to make translations and compilations for townspeople and provincials, who are in the throes of social anxiety. "Compilations" is a euphemism; the right word is "plagiarism." Thus, the work of Ahmed Auda, entitled *Al Cyn al Chaabia,* which means "The China of the People," is little more than that. The author, of course, has never been to China, and his book is made up of borrowings from various reporters who have been there. But Red China was in vogue and the Nasser government was beginning to flirt with the East, so this was of course the right moment to give voice to opinions which at other times, not so far back, would have been rewarded with a prison sentence.

IV

It will be noticed that these people belong to "the left"; and in fact, Marx, Lenin and Engels as well as a number of other Communist dialecticians are the regular fare in the discussions and readings of these emancipated individuals. This sympathy for a left which is not Trotskyist but Stalinist, may explain the naive interest with which the sinister Siqueiros, the Mexican painter who failed in an attempt to assassinate Trotsky, was welcomed. At the height of the Suez crisis, Siqueiros was granted an interview with the President.

Let it be noted that such convictions are often very superficial and often do not jibe at all with the variations of Soviet foreign policy. It is doubtless because he does not want to confuse the masses heated to a boiling point, nor to disconcert a completely new elite which supports his anti-Western politics without reserve, that Nasser has forbidden any allusion in the press to the events that took place in Hungary.

The force of Communist conviction within the intelligentia springs from their feeling that social reform in Egypt is absolutely necessary. It is almost impossible not to share this feeling once one has seen the immense extent of Egyptian poverty; what is surprising is that certain Egyptians who claim to be clear-headed have embraced a policy diametrically opposed to that of social reform. They know perfectly well that by spending millions in Jordan and in the Sudan, and by tying up the whole production of the country and its meager reserves in an

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exchange for such unproductive goods as weapons, that they shall not have raised the standard of living of the fellaheen and of the urban proletarian. It is true that there are a good many intellectuals who believe that the Nasser regime is transitional, and will be followed sooner or later by an authentically socialist government. But for the moment, they themselves confuse demagogy with socialism.

This fundamental error reveals their twin faults: their lack of scope and the essentially sentimental character of their ideas. This holds even for the students, whose level is very low and who, two years ago, were deprived of leadership by purges; it also holds for the "intelligent" officers. For both, the revolutionary adventure meant a chance for revenge. For the petty-bourgeois Moslem intellectuals it was a chance for revenge on the West which did not comprehend their problems, and overwhelmed them with unbearable condescension; for the Levantine intellectuals, it was a question of revenge on a West which had not assimilated them; for the officers, it meant revenge on Great Britain and France, their former rulers, and on Israel which had defied them in 1948.

The Communism of the intelligentsia, which is without influence on the rulers, and is able to affect public opinion only within limits set by Nasser, is, of course, a transparent mask, worn only because it frightens the West. The Levantine intellectual—and this holds also for the Egyptian—is not so different from the oriental. He admires the man with a sword—many Egyptians were pro-Nazi at the height of the war and remain so today. Rommel is still a hero in Cairo. The Egyptian intellectual is not yet detached from his ancient condition of scribe and functionary. And what about Taha Hussein? And Tewfick El Hakim? And Abbas El Accade?* They belong neither to the cosmopolitans under ban nor to the young revolutionaries. If they collaborate with the government's newspapers, their age keeps them from frenzied passions. Formed in Khedival Egypt, having lived under monarchy and a false democracy, they acquired the taste of freedom and for pure knowledge. Their literary production is what is most valuable intellectually in contemporary Egypt. Even if too much quoted, such works as the *Book of Days* and *The Call of Karawan* by Taha Hussein and the *Journal of a Country Deputy* by Tewfick El Hakim, are unequalled by anything produced by the new generation. They represent neither medieval and poetic Islam nor an Egypt imbued with the spirit of Spartacus; they stand for an Egypt which is still present in its patience, its finesse and humor; an Egypt which it will be necessary to find once more when the present Egyptian intelligentsia seeks better nourishment than Nasser's *Philosophy of the Revolution.*

Translated by LIONEL ABEL

* *Tewfick El Hakim*—novelist and dramatist. *Abbas El Accade*—essayist and ironic moralist, represents a certain democratic and liberal Egypt fast disappearing; he is—*toutes proportions gardées*—a kind of Arabian Bertrand Russell.

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THE RISE OF THE ARAB FELLAH

Tahseen M. Basheer

Every dawn from the minarets of the Arab World comes the call to prayer: "Come to pray, come to your self-betterment." Of late, the second part of the call, the appeal to self-betterment, is receiving a great response. People are not only praying to God, but are laboring to achieve what they have continued to pray for over generations. Only now do they realize the wisdom of what God revealed unto them many centuries ago: "God does not change you unless you change yourself."

This movement of mass awakening, opening its eyes after a centuries-long slumber, goes on almost unnoticed. It captures no headlines. It does not evoke any dramatic response either from traditional policy makers within or the powers without. This force does not seem to count in the calculus of their politics for it is assumed that the *fellah* will be told. And when told he will respond readily to whatever he is told. Here I am most concerned with this unromantic, indifferent, little-talked-about people of the Arab world who are fast becoming the strongest single factor in the area.

Current thinking about the Arab world has so far been shallow, inconsistent, or romantic. The split between what is thought, written and told, and what actually goes on, is constantly emphasized by changes beyond the expectations of even the informed. Only a few hours before Farouk bade his last farewell to my home town of Alexandria, experts in the leading newspapers of the West were telling us that Farouk was the strongest man in the Middle East! When Syria and Egypt moved with ease and effectiveness to their unity, experts were still telling us how impossible this was. How was this revolution of the indifferent, the immovable, the unchangeable set in motion?

Haji Napoleon

In 1798 the self-contained, isolated society that had fallen into a long sleep dreaming of past glory, was suddenly shocked by a short man coming from the shores of France, ascending the pyramids to tell the Egyptians of a new era, a new revolution and a new trinity. The man was Napoleon, the revolution was the French, and the trinity, "liberté, égalité et fraternité." At first the people resisted, but when he cleaned the streets and beautified Cairo they accepted the cleaning and the beautification. When equality was not the essence of his rule,

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they disliked the man, for they liked equality, and when he could not enter into their hearts and minds, he tried a Moslem cloak, but the false prophet was quickly discovered. Napoleon left; the ideas of the French Revolution remained. It was a short but great encounter.

A Citadel and a Tobacco Merchant

Egypt has always been a land of wonders. In the early nineteenth century the stage was a citadel and the actor a tobacco merchant from Albania, a man rebuilding Egypt and the neighboring area. He moved quickly to organize a modern army with a new know-how. The industrial revolution in Egypt began as a revolution in the organization of the machinery of war. An army needs engineers, doctors, topographers and geologists. The son of the *fellah,* called upon to become a soldier, left the fields for the battlefields.

The isolated villager invaded the Middle East, went to Greece, the heart of Arabia, even to Asia Minor, bringing Turkey, the "sick man of Europe," almost to its death. In less than ten years modern Egypt spread north from the deep provinces of the Sudan up to Turkey; eastward, joining the lands of Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia to Cairo. Chimneys rose high, competing with minarets, and Egypt became the citadel of Mohammed Ali.

The international equilibrium in the East Mediterranean was not long disturbed, for the European powers chased Mohammed Ali back to Egypt and the empire was limited to Egypt and the Sudan under Ottoman tutelage.

The story went on, *khedive* after *khedive* [lord after lord], new experiments, new hopes, new frustrations. Egyptians became engineers, army officers, were sent to the centers of learning. The *fellah's* son's imagination—with the help of the printing press—spread a new gospel and the people learned of something called democracy, of no taxation without representation, and a great debate went on: who is master of Egypt?—an alien royal family or the people?

Gentlemen with Broken Promises

In 1881, the people of Egypt, under the leadership of the army, staged a peaceful demonstration telling the *khedive* that they wanted better representation. At that moment Britain moved into Alexandria to back the king against the people. The Egyptian learned that democracy was not an item on the British export list, and this confrontation saw the West suppress the budding of an internal democracy. The British came uninvited and promised to leave as soon as things were well organized for the king. They stayed more than eighty years. They did not transform Egypt into a British-style colony, as in the case of India. They did, however, transform Egypt into a huge farm. King Cotton became master. The size of the cotton crop showed an uninterrupted increase from 3 million bales in 1879 to almost 8 million bales in 1913.

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The Vicious Trinity

Egypt was left with an unholy trinity—a king, the landlords, and the British. The King is as ancient an institution as Egypt itself. To Egyptians in the thousands of villages that compose the valley of the Nile there was always a sun and there is always a king. Names might differ, royal families change, but the sovereign remains the same—a monarch and a royal family. The king was interested in keeping his privileged position not only as the sovereign of Egypt but also as one of the richest landlords and business men in the country. With the king came the system of titles, putting every Egyptian in a hierarchy of official classification commensurate with royal satisfaction. He could become "His Elevated Highness" or "His Most Prominent Highness" or "His Excellency"; he could be a "pasha," a "bey," or an "effendi." This Egypt was a country of contrasts, a big palace surrounded by mud huts. The same contrasts existed in political life. There was a parliament elected by the people, but the people had no voice in its deliberations. For more than thirty years parliament never passed any law significantly increasing land taxation. The people looked upon the parliament as an added imposition by the central government. Yet parliaments were not all the same. At times the administrative screws were looser and there was an air of free election. Sometimes honest voices of opposition were able to exercise pressure. While fulfilment of campaign promises never fully materialized, people enjoyed the campaign; its free festivities and uninhibited promises accentuated the process of political communication. After sunset in the little villages, when the evenings are dull, the public school teacher or the sheik start to tell the city news, informing the illiterates of the great events that are happening. After the recital there are the deliberations. The *Ommda* (mayor), the school teacher, the country doctor, the sheik, put their heads together to decipher the political puzzles of the world. Election time is a homecoming period; prodigal sons, seeking election, come back with embraces and words. These words have a magic of their own, a magic which cannot be pinned down. Life in the country keeps rolling on. There seems to be no change, but underneath it all new seeds are gaining roots.

"El-Aiyyan": the Landed Aristocracy

When Mohammed Ali became the ruler of Egypt, he declared himself sovereign, the sole ruler and owner of the land. It was not until the rule of his son Said that private landownership was granted. Gradually under the British, with land reclamation projects and the introduction of a modern system of landownership registration, the heads of many families became landowners in the modern sense.

This system served well the Lancashire textile market, but the fruits of the land went neither to the sovereign nor the government, nor to the toilers of the land. They were suitably divided between the British and foreign exporters and the landlords. With this new class

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of landlords, a new class of landless peasants also developed as its counterpart. In the 1950s 1.5 per cent of the landowners held half of the land, while the other half was divided among the remaining 98.5 per cent of the proprietors. This maldistribution of ownership was aggravated by the inadequacy of the arable acreage. For many years the population has grown faster than reclaimed land, thus making a bad situation progressively worse. Six million acres of arable land cannot support two or three million farm families in decency, even if it is very productive and much of it is double cropped.

This cleavage between the landowners and the landless meant each began to develop his own society. The landowners started to imitate the masters of Egypt, the king and the British, developing tastes and modes of life different from those rooted in their environment. This, in turn, gave rise to the phenomenon of absentee landlordism in which the owners dwelt in urban centers or wandered about Europe showing no interest even in expanding their own resources. Their lavish life added to the physical discontent and frustration of the mass of the people. Not only economic inequality prevailed in the countryside, but also social alienation. The cumulative effect was an acute land hunger among the peasantry to whom agriculture is not merely an occupation but a way of life.

Before July 1952, the landlord class, with the help of the king and the British, dominated the political scene. They were able to maintain their control over the *fellahin* by the traditional subordination of the peasantry to the landowners, coupled with the machinery of traditional religion and the police force. The problem was partly relieved in the past by migrations to urban centers. But with the high rate of population increase, with the new crop of a thousand babies a day, signs of local peasant revolts began to occur in 1950. In the cities the romantic political agitation centered its attack on the state of peasant misery.

As the juggling of political power between these three forces went on in Egypt, the people at large did not know clearly with whom to start: whether to ally themselves with the king and landowners against the British, or vice versa. The vicious circle was broken by the army's dethronement of the king in 1952. At that time a change that was already taking place reached its fruition all over Egypt...

The Fellah in the Classroom

Education, whatever the reason for its inception, whether for the expansion of a modern army or the supply of trained bureaucrats for modern government machinery or for enlightenment, is a laboratory for the Westernization of hundreds of thousands of people, the sons of hundreds and thousands of *fellahin*. School books, discussion, reading offer them a new and powerful medium of mass communication. Education generates unlimited hopes. In students coming mostly from a severely paternal family system, it engenders idealism and invites action. This idealism transcends differences of class and religion; it exerts

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a unifying effect. The students gradually became a class of their own.

After the British occupation the army was dispersed. There was no one in the country to carry on legitimate opposition. There was no thought or hope but to trust in the young, for they alone are the disinterested; they alone are able to challenge; they alone are the carriers of change in a society undergoing a critical period of transition. The students set themselves up as the trustees of Egypt, trying to end internal exploitation and liberate the country from the foreign occupiers. They were able to organize mass public demonstrations, to use the mass media, pressure organizations and propaganda, to topple governments when they smelled treason. They were able to stage the revolution of 1919 in which every little village in Egypt participated in boycotting the British. The students constitute an urbanizing force even if they come from the countryside. They were the ones who awoke the national consciousness, for in their long summers they would go home to their farms in the country and tell the people about freedom and liberty. They opened the closed doors.

After the revolution of 1919 came the rise of political parties. Some said that the restricted constitution of 1923 offered a reasonable basis for Egypt, the majority wanted the total evacuation of the British, and a few wanted no negotiations until after full evacuation. Idealistic leadership now degenerated into demagoguery. By 1938 the union that had been achieved on national issues was split along party lines. The students became isolated within their own compounds. Their leadership failed to reach a reasonable compromise between Ideal and practice. Some escaped in ivory towers and others crept into indifference. The society was growing, the labor force was growing, the army was enlarging its ranks after the 1936 treaty which gave Egypt a freer hand in building a new army.

Gradually the heavy responsibility now thrust upon Egypt's educated youth was shared by other growing classes. Yet the students who had survived the strong pressures on their freedom by governments and university administrations lived above partisanship, giving Egypt a sense of direction when the country was falling into confusion. Today they are still a tremendous social force. For they have to provide the teacher to educate the illiterate, the thinker to egg on the complacent, and above all the intellectual elite that will save Egypt from isolation and self-containment and provide a healthy atmosphere of criticism that will always challenge the status quo.

The Bourgeoisie

Under the British, development in Egypt was carried on by foreign entrepreneurs and financiers with foreign money. The business community of Cairo and Alexandria and other cities was a curious mixture of French, British, Maltese, Greeks, Italians, Belgians and stateless. It included serious businessmen as well as adventurers. People with no roots in Egypt came to make a profit and plough it back in their home countries. Egyptian banks were subsidiaries of British

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and French Banks. Their main function was to finance the export of cotton. Egyptian industry was not encouraged. The Egyptians were told that they had no knack for industrial enterprise. European capital was attracted to a remunerative money market in Egypt while the system of capitulations (foreign privileges) offered it a privileged position. In 1914 the foreign community numbered 150,000 out of a total population of 12,000,000; yet more than 99 per cent of Egyptian business was conducted by foreigners.

Such an unnatural state of affairs could not last indefinitely, and as early as 1879, when the Egyptian press began to enjoy some freedom of expression, a first attempt was made to remedy it by laying the foundation for a native bourgeoisie. A movement for creating a national bank to buy and redeem the public debt was gathering strength. The promoters of this project pointed out that the only way for underdeveloped oriental countries to grow was through trade and industry, which required large amounts of capital that only banks, drawing on the savings of the public, could provide. This led to the creation of Banque Misr and its affiliated 15 industrial companies ushering in a local bourgeoisie. Many wealthy Egyptians whose main concern had been the acquisition of land, started joining the ranks of industrial promoters, thereby creating a landlord-industrial class.

Other Egyptian promoters came from politics and the civil service, usually after a period of apprenticeship on the boards of foreign companies, where they acquired some knowledge of business administration. The rise of this class, and the utilization of nationalism by some Egyptian businesses to seek Government protection, played an increasing role in Egyptian life.

The Army Officer

With the rise of the Egyptian middle class, Egyptians who had infiltrated the ranks of the army found themselves blocked from promotion beyond the rank of colonel. Senior officers were alien elements of Turkish or Albanian origin, who had no affinity with the people but close association with the palace. The army in 1881 joined forces with the people to limit the power of the *khedive,* but the British entered Egypt and dispersed the army.

Not until 1936 was a new Egyptian army reborn. And then its officer corps came not from the ranks of the privileged but was infused with the sons of poorer classes. Managing through education to go up the social ladder, these officers had behind them the same political experience that the other students did. They were indoctrinated with the same nationalism. They shared with other students a disdain for the multiplicity of political parties that do not achieve any national goal.

In Egypt there was a need for "a hero effect." Maybe it was a modern version of the Moslem expectation of a *mehdi* or a "messiah" to cure all ills. The army too is a modern western organization. It is a melting pot and, in a country where national pride was frustrated by the British and the king, it is a school where political ideas are

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transformed into action. The army had been the shield of the king and it was transformed into the shield of the people.

The genius of Nasser was that within the army he stopped the formation of "little Nassers." Trying to imitate the hero, others had staged their own little "revolutions." By the policy of a carrot and a stick, with moral suasion and appeals to patriotism, he is leading the country out of the slippery path of a sequence of *coups d'états.*

"From Here We Start"

This was the title of a book by the young Azhar University graduate, Mohammad Khalid, stating in clear terms that Islam does not prescribe a definite political and social system; that all those who keep evoking solutions to contemporary problems from Moslem tradition are imposing a priesthood on a religion which believes in direct individual contact between man and God. They are trying to acquire a monopoly over the conscience of the Moslem whom God has ordained free. Khalid called on Egypt to look eastward and westward—to gain experiences from both directions.

"From Here We Learn" retorted the traditionalists. Islam, they said, embodies the belief that it is the fulfilment of previous revelations and the final revelation of the Eternal God concerning the truth of the universe, of man and his destiny. It is a universal religion, not the religion of the elite, nor of a chosen people, nor even a particular nation, but of all men and women who are equal before God. It is fitting for all times and all places, and what is needed is the right interpretation.

So went the debate—a return to traditional Islam or a freer outlook on Islam? Extreme traditionalists asserted everything must be Islamic in letter and form and in contrast there emerged a variety of schools of thought in the name of psyche and Freud, the German school of dialectics and Hegel, the legal school of reason, law and patriotism, and the advocates of the new religion of Marx and Lenin.

Egyptians took a rather pragmatic approach. Islam offers them spiritual ideas and a sense of transcendence. It gives them a universal outlook and an extra-national brotherhood. It answers not only their worldly problems but their search for the afterlife. In a land where the afterlife has been a living force in the minds of Egyptians since the Pharaohs, a sense of transcendentalism is not only a religious need but also a social one.

Nevertheless, when it comes to practical questions, the young generation uses expediency. After all, God is merciful if you are wrong. The Moslem idea of man's fate, as judged by the tipping of the good and bad scales, offers a rational leeway. Still when it comes to fundamental questions the young shy away, leaving accumulated questions unanswered. The discrepancy between actions and beliefs leaves a widening ideological vacuum. There are no easy ways out. In a country with a long tradition, easy answers are suspect. Mass conversion to any new ideology is most unlikely to challenge the fundamental

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belief in man's equality under God as presented by Islam.

Meanwhile there is a need for a social ideology that will answer the urge for social reform, for individual liberty within the bonds of unity —a social system that will be harmonious with the essence of religion and will mold it in such a form that it will be comprehensible within the Egyptian political and social experience.

Coup d'Etat, Movement and Revolution

The young officers moved in July 1952 to break the vicious circle, and to the surprise of everyone the all-powerful king gave way under the first blow. The monarchy was abolished. In the countryside people could not believe that the sun of the monarchy had set.

In a country where land is the source of life there could be no real revolution unless there was a land revolution. So, landownership was limited to 200 acres. The huge estates of the royal family were confiscated and rents were fixed by law. The Land Reform Law plus the land confiscated from the royal family benefited more than one million people. Approximately 200,000 plots of land were given to 200,000 *fellahs* who, with their families, amounted to one million formerly landless farm workers.* The land inequality which prevailed under previous regimes was partly rectified. But Egypt needs more and more land in order to remedy the old imbalances in wealth. The land reform, however, was the most peaceful one in recent history and the most effective one of any under-developed country. Yields per acre did not decrease; cooperatives were introduced. There was a tremendous increase in the propensity to own land. This was the single, most effective anti-Communist move in the modern Middle East.

The New Arab

From these experiences a new identity is emerging. The new Arab unity is not a deed left by a certain *sherif* to his sons and grandsons; it is not the heritage of a royal family or a piece of property that they can distribute the way they desire. It is the awakened spirit of millions of *fellahin* and *bedouin* who want a solid basis for their society; who believe that within the Arab countries there are enough resources of oil, water and land that can be utilized for the benefit of all the people. They do not want slave drivers who sign a treaty with a foreign protector and who then get the cream of the land. The new Arab does not believe in race theory. To him, being an "Arab" is the ability to speak the language identified with the hopes and aspirations of the people. It is a melting pot of many nations and many historical experiences. Above all, he is not a Levantine living as a parasite on foreign powers. He wants to build, with dignity and in peace, his homeland.

* *Land Reform in Egypt*, by Sayed Marie, 1957.

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NIGHTMARES, DAYDREAMS, AND PROF. SHILS

Lewis A. Coser

We belong to a period of which the culture is in danger of being destroyed by the appliances of culture.

•

He who regards human beings as a herd, and thus flies from them as fast as he can, will certainly be caught up by them and gored upon their horns. —NIETZSCHE

Bergson once wrote about the man who, when asked why he didn't weep at a sermon which reduced everyone else to tears, replied: "I don't belong to the parish." Bergson felt that what that man had said of tears was even more true for laughter: those who refuse to join in our merriment are perturbing, they spoil the fun. This may be why the enthusiastic participants in the American Celebration are so perturbed by the handful of dissenting critics who refuse to join them. And it may also explain their eagerness to prove that if these critics decline to cheer there must be something wrong with *them* —since, manifestly, there can be very little wrong with American culture. Hence the need to refer to the alleged personal sources of the critics' discontent. Not the cultural situation needs scrutiny, but the motives of the critics. If these evil spirits can be successfully exorcized with the help of psychoanalysis, the sociology of knowledge or whatever other tool may seem handy, than it becomes possible again to relax into a stance of satisfied acceptance.

That those to whom "celebrating" is part of their job are often deeply uneasy about it, a score of novels and semi-sociological reports, most often written by disillusioned members of the fraternity, have recently documented. What is more remarkable is that those for whom celebrating is, so to speak, an extracurricular activity seem to share these anxieties. How else is one to explain their obsessive concern with the few dissenting critics of mass culture who write for the small off-beat publications?

I

A recent attack upon the critics of modern mass culture by Professor Edward A. Shils entitled "Daydreams and Nightmares: Reflections on the Criticism of Mass Culture" in the *Sewanee Review* [Fall, 1957] provides an excellent example of, and might also serve as a springboard for some reflections on, that curious American phenomenon: the politics of *willed*

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conservatism. Since few of our readers are likely to have read Professor Shils' article we will try to summarize his main argument.

How, asks Mr. Shils, can we account for the recent outcropping of criticism of mass culture? Earlier criticism by such men as Ortega y Gasset or Wyndham Lewis was mainly impelled by an elitist, esthetic outlook common to many of the European opponents of political democracy since the early nineteenth century, and therefore had but few repercussions in democratic America. Recently, however, such criticism of mass culture has gained in amplitude, force and coherence on this side of the Atlantic. Professor Shils is convinced that he has found the true explanation for this phenomenon. The majority of more recent critics of mass culture, he writes, "are or were, Marxian socialists, some even rather extreme, at least in their past commitment to the socialist ideal." From Dwight Macdonald to Max Horkheimer, from Erich Fromm to Czeslaw Milosz, from *Politics* to DISSENT what do we find but socialist, near-Marxist and ex-Marxist critics. Because these writers have lost the hope that the working class would usher in a new and better society, "their earlier economic criticism of capitalist society has been transformed into a moral and cultural criticism of the large scale industrial society." Thus current criticism of mass culture can be shown to be really the "transmogrified Marxism of the disappointed." Their critical interpretation of mass culture rests on an image of modern man which has been imported into the United States from Germany and is at bottom German romanticism in modern American dress. It rests on a romanticizing distortion of the pre-industrial past in which traditions were allegedly stable, men fully integrated into their community and communal solidarity unquestioned. The "transmogrified Marxist" critics have elaborated "arbitrary constructions" as to the non-industrial past, which they then counterpose to no less arbitrary constructions concerning a modern urban present that is said to be characterized by impersonality and anonymity, the severing of the bonds of tradition, kinship, religious belief and loyalty. Apart from Marx himself those most responsible for this distortion have been the German sociologists, especially Ferdinand Toennies and Georg Simmel.

Mr. Shils feels that this disastrous distortion of the facts needs to be set right by pointing out, for example, that hunger and imminence of death, that burdensome labor and very long work hours prevented the development of individuality, sensitivity and refinement in the great majority of the lower classes in pre-industrial society, and that theirs was a culture of bear-baiting, cockfighting and drunkenness, of lurid tales and frightening superstitions. Hence only ignorance or prejudice can account for the modern critics' idealizing and romanticizing of the past.* In fact, modern mass cul-

* Shils, one might remark in passing, is not always, let us say, overscrupulous in his quotations. Thus in his attack on a major critic of mass culture, Ernest van den Haag, he writes, "It is sheer romanticism when Professor van den Haag says 'industry has impoverished life.' The contrary is true. Hunger and imminence of death, work such as we in the West would now regard as too burdensome even for beasts, very long hours, prevented the development of individuality, of sensitivity or refinement..." This may seem quite a polemical blow—until we look at what van den Haag really wrote: "While immensely augmenting our comforts, our conveniences and our leisure, and dis-

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ture is less damaging to the lower classes than pre-industrial culture. "Only the frustrated attachment to an impossible ideal of human perfection, and a distaste for one's own society and for human beings as they are, can obscure this." "The root of the trouble lies not in mass culture but in the intellectuals themselves." "It is quite likely that the majority never will be able to develop good taste or discriminating judgment," but "a substantial minority" might quite possibly, "after several generations," be "assimilated into one of the various traditions of high culture." This is the substance of Professor Shils' argument.

One might be tempted to dismiss all this by pointing out, for example, that it is simply not true that all or the majority of critics of mass culture, even those whom Shils cites, are or ever were socialists, Marxists, ex-Marxists and the like. Ernest van den Haag, one of Shils' chief targets, happens to have views on economics which my banker-father would have called a trifle old-fashioned back in the twenties. One might also point out that the whole category of "socialists, Marxists, ex-Marxists" is so vague and ill defined that it might be possible to include in it a very high proportion of American intellectuals. And one might even point out that Professor Shils, whose role in introducing Karl Mannheim to America would seem *prima facie* evidence that he himself had once a rather deep affinity with the intellectual tendency he attacks, should be a bit circumspect when he argues from past affiliation to present position. But then that would be indulging in the same type of *ad hominem* argumentation which Shils employs throughout his piece. Let us rather make an attempt to consider *principia, non homines.*

II

The crucial question, I suppose, is whether there is anything unique, anything fundamentally new in modern mass culture or whether, as Shils claims, modern man lives in a basically unchanged cultural milieu and remains *"l'homme moyen sensuel* known to past ages." One need by no means claim that pre-industrial society was better, one need only show that the cultural conditions in that society were qualitatively different, if one wishes to point out how invalid and irrelevant Mr. Shils' strictures really are. In fact any standard cultural history, not only those tainted by what Mr. Shils would call Marxist bias, documents such qualitative differences. In certain areas there has been not only difference but also deterioration. Cultural historians note significant deteriorations of the cultural level even within the last hundred years. Thus Margaret Dalziel's painstaking examination of *Popular Fiction 100 Years Ago* (Cohen and West, London 1957) notes that the fierce joys of sadism displayed in, say, Mickey Spillane "are quite without parallel in my reading of penny dreadfuls and similar Nineteenth Century literature." "I believe," she writes, "that standards in modern popular fiction have deteriorated very seriously during the past hundred years." William Hoggart's splendid *The Uses of Literacy* (Essential Books, 1958) shows in impressive detail how in the

proportionately raising the real income of the poor, industry has *also* impoverished life." [Emphasis added] Professor Shils is known for his Anglophile sentiments but this has not apparently led him to emulate the British sense of fair play.

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last few decades British working class values have been eroded by the mass media.

But even if one were to grant that discussions of deterioration or improvement always involve complicated and value-laden appraisals, one must be willfully blind to deny that there have been deep-going changes, involving fundamental differences, between pre-industrial and industrial culture. Industrial civilization has destroyed those bonds of communal values which linked the individual to the traditional culture of which he was a part. Now this is not a value judgment, it is a statement of fact which can easily be verified. And if the historical evidence is considered doubtful, it can be checked in any of the contemporary underdeveloped countries. Industrialization has not simply meant a further stage in development, it has brought in its wake a catastrophic disruption of the patterns of common life. I do not here argue about desirability; I merely note a fact of common observation. Discrimination between the cultural situation before and after industrialization involves no apologia for bear baiting, witch hunting, exhausting labor and high death rates, as Mr. Shils would have his readers believe. It simply involves an attempt to discover the peculiar characteristics which distinguish particular cultural conditions. And it involves moreover the need to discard the simplistic argument that there are neat stages in human development, that history develops step by step like a staircase. What from one point of view may be seen as a gain may from another point of view bring significant losses.

Perhaps such discriminations are really of no great importance for Mr. Shils, One suspects that he shares in that contempt for the multitude which is one of the distinguishing marks of the New Conservatism. The new elitists are convinced that as a matter of common fact human nature is always the same, that there always has existed a gulf between the sodden masses and the cultured elite, so that there is really no need to engage in finer historical discriminations. By contrast, writers who are concerned with the cultural fate of the great majority of mankind must concentrate on stressing the qualitative differences in their cultural situation, precisely because they are concerned in establishing that distinctions between the elite and the mass are historically changing distinctions.

The effort to arrive at criteria which allow for fruitful discrimination involves a comparison with past periods, but it need not lead to a glorification of the past. And even if one were to grant that some critics of mass culture do at times tend to romanticize the past a little, does that in any way lessen the power of the criticism they make of the present? More importantly, to say that certain aspects of life in a medieval village had a somewhat attractive quality is in no way to deny that there was also misery, illiteracy and hunger. When one says that folk culture once had vitality, this does not mean that one desires a return to it or thinks such a return to be possible. The very essence of historical perspective consists in an ability to recognize certain losses in those changes which one may nevertheless feel to have been necessary, inevitable and perhaps even desirable. All these elementary points are obscured in Professor Shils' anxious concern to defend the present cultural situation. He is drawn to what might be termed global re-

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sponses, he loses the ability to discriminate between various aspects of the total arguments he is discussing. It hardly behooves so cultivated a critic as Mr. Shils to succumb so easily to what Whitehead has called "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness."

Like Karl Mannheim in his earlier writings, Mr. Shils does not sufficiently distinguish between the incorrectness and the one-sidedness of an intellectual position. Even if he should be able to show that the intellectual heritage of some of the critics of mass culture may predispose them to a one-sided emphasis on certain aspects of that culture and the consequent neglect of others, he has not thereby shown that their views are false. Are the writers he cites correct when they point to the dehumanizing, the desensitizing aspect of mass culture or are they not? Such questions cannot possibly be decided by reference to the critics' perspective, their moral allegiances and the like; they can be decided only by reference to facts and by serious argument.

III

Not only does Mr. Shils attempt to discredit the critics of mass culture by pointing to their alleged discreditable ancestry; he contemptuously refuses to discuss seriously the arguments they advance. He is ostensibly reviewing *Mass Culture* (edited by Bernard Rosenberg and David M. White, The Free Press, 1957), that is, a book in which some of the most telling arguments of the critics of mass culture are brought together, along with some of the arguments of its defenders. Here we find Dwight Macdonald's thesis that mass culture, as distinct from other cultural forms, "is imposed from above. It is fabricated by technicians hired by businessmen." Here is Clement Greenberg's argument that mass culture, as distinct from folk culture, feeds parasitically upon high culture, that it levels cultural distinctions, that it erodes standards, that it homogenizes culture. The book offers literally hundreds of examples of the qualitative difference between mass culture and other types of culture. But Mr. Shils disdains to concern himself with all this—it isn't worthy of his attention for a reason analogous to that which leads the True Marxist to consider it beneath his dignity to discuss the findings of "bourgeois science." Having triumphantly assumed that the ideas he is analyzing can only have grown up on the compost of radical alienation, he decides that it is not worthwhile to discuss the truth value of these assertions. Under such conditions, of course, a "dialogue" is not possible; all that is left is debunking. But by engaging in such procedures Professor Shils, the professed conservative and defender of western civilization, is helping to sap the very foundations of this civilization of the dialogue; he contributes to the defeat of the very reason which he professes to defend.

In this article and in his other recent writings Professor Shils poses as a kind of neo-Burkean conservative gentleman, a moderate, urbane, relaxed and cultivated commentator upon the fads and foibles of impassioned radicals and "philanthropic liberals," a thinker safe and sane who is simply appalled by those impatient fellows (non-U all of them, no doubt) who feel the need to oppose the present in the name of some "utopian" image of a better society. One might thus have expected that he would wind up his argument by reference

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to the frailties of human nature, the philosophy of limits, the tragedy of the human condition or any of those other abstractions fashionable today among those who have labored hard to will into being their modish conservatism. But here he reserves for us an interesting surprise: he comes up with a simplistic and vulgarized version of, incredibly enough, the Theory of Progress! This is indeed a beautiful instance of what Freud has termed the "return of the repressed." Yes, admits Professor Shils, things don't go too well today, but wait a few generations, and while the majority can never really be expected to develop good taste or discriminating judgment, a substantial minority, if exposed long enough to high culture or reasonable facsimiles thereof, will finally absorb it as by osmosis. This might be called the Theory of Progress by Contamination: Dip the clods into the vat of culture long enough and some of the fat will stick . . .

There are some curious and unanticipated parallels here between Professor Shils and those modern millenarians whom I recently had occasion to discuss in these pages. While the latter desire to make us accept the horrors and miseries of the totalitarian present in the name of History and Tomorrows that Sing, while they blunt our sensibilities to the injustices of the day by reference to the felicities of the morrow, Professor Shils attempts to dull our sense of indignation about the state of mass culture in the American present by reference to some indeterminate future in which, if not everybody, at least significant numbers of people will be saved. The operation is basically the same in both cases, the motive is the same. And our reason for opposing it is fundamentally the same: if we refrain from proclaiming that the fish stink, the Eastern fish and the Western fish, we prepare a future in which it will no longer be possible even to notice that they stink. If we don't succeed in stopping the present trend toward the homogenization of culture, there will remain no high culture to which anybody can be assimilated in the future. To believe that culture will somehow steadily progress from the awful to the somewhat less awful and then to the still less awful is to succumb to the fallacy of pathetic optimism.

It turns out, I submit, that not Professor Shils, the self-professed defender of tradition and conservatism, but the radical critic is genuinely concerned with cultural survival. Professor Shils' emotional ambivalence toward the radical critics—an ambivalence he shares with many other American intellectuals—has led him to become blinded to the symptoms of acute sickness in the culture he professes to defend. Western culture may be able to deal with its critics, but who will protect it from its friends?

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AMERICAN NOTEBOOK Some Brief Comments On the Domestic Scene

Cancer in the U.S.: an Extended Metaphor

Melvin Seiden

. . . .its name has a mysterious and disquieting sound, and no one has ever really understood why Hippocrates chose it. Was it to portray the outline of certain cancers of the breast, whose ramifications suggest a crab with its claws buried in the living flesh? Or was it to describe the gnawing, shooting pain caused by those claws? Nobody knows. But the name, perhaps on account of its enigmatic quality, brings to mind with singular clarity the condition to which it belongs.—CHARLES OBERLING: *The Riddle of Cancer*

Cancer is the twentieth century disease. If not in scientific fact, then surely in the fear-ridden depths of our imagination, cancer seems to be the special nemesis of our age. President Eisenhower's politically dramatic heart attack created a journalistic image of this disease that for a while seemed to challenge the hold of its older rival, cancer, in the popular imagination. Dr. Paul Dudley White's tough but optimistic face is part of that image which, on the whole, is a surprisingly beneficent one. But the sober scientific facts are less important than the attitudes they evoke. We tend to think of heart-disease as *one* thing: it strikes one organ, it always produces more or less the same effects, it seems a commonsensical disease, uncomplicated, unmysterious, and rational. Above all, rational—in the sense in which we make the most sense out of the idea of rationality, the Aristotelian *cum* Franklin notion of the golden mean. We can understand the dangers of excess, and though we may choose to ignore the golden mean, we do this knowing full well that we must pay a price for too much. Heart-disease seems to be such a price.

From the therapeutic point of view it is what we do not know about cancer that is so appalling. What we do know about it is, however, fearful enough to the man who sees himself as a figure in the actuaries' tables. He knows, for one thing, that there seems to be no predictable pattern as to who, when, or why it strikes. Doesn't this translate into the proposition that, unlike heart-disease, there is no morality of cancer? The connection between cause and effect is so little understood,

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the number of causes so great, and their relationships so complex that we find ourselves thinking about cancer much as primitive men must think about all disease. We have sufficient confidence in science to expect that it will someday force cancer to yield up at least enough of its secrets to allow doctors to effect cures. But an ounce of prevention is still worth a pound of cure, and doctors who only cure are never publicly canonized with the Pasteurs and the Salks. Medical white magic finds its apotheosis in preventive therapy.

THE LAYMAN knows next to nothing about cell structure and cell division. He must convert the concepts of biology and physiology into vivid and emotionally meaningful language. *He thus envisages cancer as reproduction gone berserk.* Destroyed is the inner microcosm, the orderly and rational process in which new life is coming to birth while other parts of the living whole wither away. We conceive of the systole and diastole of life itself as the most perfect equilibrium achieved by nature. It is not, therefore, too difficult to imagine cancer as a kind of grotesque and chaotic perversion of this process, with cells wantonly and arbitrarily multiplying themselves. One poeticizes these cancerous cells as actively willing their reckless proliferation, a notion that must be attributed to the powerful anthropomorphizing instinct, no doubt, but a compelling one nevertheless.

Apparently cancer behaves in a way that is not easily distinguishable from the processes that go on within healthy organisms. It seems to have greater vitality, less vulnerability to natural enemies which might attack it, and immense fecundity. It seems to exhibit precisely those health-preserving strengths with which healthy organisms are insufficiently endowed. In itself a kind of super-health, cancer is the enemy of the total economy of the body which we call health. It is a condition of growth which causes life to decay; but more important, it is also a condition which, though it cannot exist without killing, cannot exist after it has killed.

Described in such a way, cancer becomes an appropriate symbol for phenomena that are apparently healthy while exhibiting a dubious fecundity that may be both benign and dangerous.

Cancer then is not solely a physiological phenomenon, it is a cultural one as well. It is real in the sense which no sane person would dream of questioning; yet it is also a potent force in conditioning our world-view, an ingredient in our individual and collective consciousness.

THE STUDY OF CANCER has been the special province of the biological scientist. But now that awareness of cancer is becoming so prominent a feature in the landscape of twentieth century anxiety, we find ourselves needing the insights of the social scientist and the poet. The influence of this pervasive awareness may be likened to that of the automobile. It is now evident that in its main function of providing rapid, cheap, and efficient transportation, the automobile has not effected changes as radical as the secondary developments that took place once this primary function had been fulfilled. Suburbia, consumer-habits nurtured in the super-market, a courting code designed for encounters in the back seats of automobiles, the revival of the Renaissance idea of educa-

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tion through travel—these manifestations of the automobile as a way of life have wrought profound changes in our culture. These developments can be observed and roughly measured. It would be considerably more difficult to assess the influence of our American *idea,* technologically engendered and universally entertained, that we are in all things a mobile people. Similarly, we find ourselves dealing with elusive material once we begin to chart the currents of cancer-awareness.

Put it to the man who reads *Time* that cancer-awareness is a peculiarity of American civilization and he is likely to see in this one kind of irony: though we are the most vigorous and culturally healthy nation in the world, we seem to have been badly bitten by an excessive fear of cancer. (Thus the articles and books which exhort us to view cancer with "commonsense"—that is, without fear.) Cancer is a most notable example of recalcitrant nature defying our attempts to control it for the betterment of man. Since such an emphasis stresses the fact that cancer is alien to the impulse of our society, we can be reasonably certain that it will fail to recognize any symbolic affinities between the disease and other aspects of our culture. We must first see cancer in its paradoxical dimension—*in its image of demonic energy, as a self-generating, self-sufficient but otherwise purposeless and ultimately destructive potency*—if we are to discern the quite different irony of its symbolic relevance to other parts of American culture in which growth and decay show similar symptoms.

II

In the French anti-war film, "Grand Illusion," there is a scene in which the captive soldiers (of the First World War) discuss the connection between disease and the various social and professional classes. Gout is the rich man's disease, tuberculosis the artist's, and so forth. (As I recall, cancer is not mentioned.) The idea is not particularly original, though in the film it is expressed with a kind of Marxian mordancy. The more one thinks about the symbolic nature of disease, the less one is likely to dismiss its manifestations as the observer's errors of pathetic fallacy. English literature in the seventeenth and in the eighteenth century, where the obsession reached its apotheosis, is haunted by the spectre of venereal disease. Rotting noses, rheumy eyes, and spavined legs take on a symbolic character alongside a cluster of images mirroring the genesis of the disease in prostitution and its hoped-for cure in pharmacy. In nineteenth century Europe tuberculosis was the modern disease, and permeating its literature there is a sense of the air having been fouled, of emotional and intellectual well-being conceived of as the ability to breathe freely in uncontaminated air.

And now the threat of atomic and hydrogen warfare imposes a schizoid pattern upon our anxieties: like spectators seated in mid-court at a tennis match, we must nervously keep the health of the world's body and of our own under surveillance. The language of those men of good will who deplore the military application of the principles of nuclear fission, suggests the inevitable metaphor: cancerous. And the metaphor cuts deeper than the obvious rhetorical intent. For there is indeed a striking similarity between the massive and always potentially uncontrollable energies unleashed by nuclear fission and cancerous growths.

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Both strike one as disorders of overproduction and excessive power in the context of environments incapable of fully assimilating or existing compatibly with the new forces that assert themselves so violently. As in the fable of the sorcerer's apprentice, nuclear fission threatens to assume a revolutionary role and to become independent of the master's powers. From this point of view, cancer represents a more advanced development. Here, the principle of growth, ordinarily subservient to the total organic process, has assumed an independence and an autonomy so powerful that one begins to think of what is after all a process as if it were an animate and individualistically constituted *thing*.

WE MAY REJECT the Marxist prognosis, but can we deny the prophetic accuracy of the diagnosis that described capitalism's inherent weakness as one of under-consumption manifesting itself as over-production? The free-enterprise method of increasing consumption is a dual one: it seeks to put more dollars into more pockets and to increase our desires for more, better, and a greater variety of commodities. The second of these strategies has had a profound effect upon our culture.

Never before has it been necessary to teach men to want more. The great philosophies and religions have sought to educate men to want less, so that purged of indiscriminate and promiscuous desires, they might be free to want what is most excellent. This idea has been expressed in many different ways, but it has usually arisen in societies in which economic scarcity or the threat of it has been present. Such an economy is bound to impose upon those who live in the society a psychology of austerity. Seldom in the course of history, and then only among an elite minority, do we find anything but scarcity and austerity. Far from being good in themselves, these have been responsible for much that is ugly, brutal, and inhumane in man's dealings with his fellow man. In themselves, abundance and indulgence are probably preferable to scarcity and austerity. However, we are familiar with the evils of man's perennial condition of want and too little aware of the new evils that could result from the reversal of this condition.

Since the creation seemed insufficiently endowed, man knew that he must live by the sweat of his brow. "Give us this day our daily bread," he asked; and if he has been given abundance and much that he never dreamed of asking for, does he dare refuse these blessings? Unfortunately, they cannot simply be accepted; they must be consumed in a double sense: they must be appropriated and they must be expended, used-up. Abundance is the consequence of skillful and assiduous labor. At the same time it is a generating force, coercing us into still greater expenditures of labor so that we may have the means to consume at a continually accelerating rate those commodities that have been produced. Now the utilitarian principle of production for the sake of consumption is perfectly rational. Is it an exaggeration to claim that economic means and ends have nearly been reversed in America and that to a remarkable extent we consume, irrationally, for the sake of production?

What we find is not simply an illusory progress, a lag between the rate of technological advance and the diminishment of man's labors, but something worse. If it were only the failure of

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progress that needed to be explained, we might fall back upon Original Sin: by the Divine punitive intention, the Fall dooms man to live by an ingenuity always insufficient to the counter-ingenuity of a more or less hostile environment. But Adam and Eve cannot help us to make sense out of gradually increasing labors that cannot be measured by eight-hour days and forty-hour weeks. Time expended in labor has indeed diminished. But the commitment of body and spirit, the giving of oneself totally and without reservation has increased. From the farmer, mechanized and yet enslaved, to the new "organization man," working amid physical comforts and yet deeply harried, we find men expending themselves—spending their very selves—in labor to a degree that seems to surpass what may have been imposed upon us by the Fall.

IRRATIONAL THOUGH IT IS, the proliferation of labor expended and goods produced can be controlled; we have learned to ride with its punch. There is advertising, economic medicine from a prescription by Mithridates. It is as if our physicians were to decide that the best way to lick cancer is to assimilate it, to train the body to live with ever-increasing doses of its poison. There is "national defense." Inevitably, the person stricken with incurable cancer finds his way to the radiologist's office. The doctor has told his family that there is little to be hoped for from X-ray, radium, or cobalt treatment. But the wife, mother, or brother feels that the patient must take a chance, since there's nothing to lose but money. Benign cancers (differentiated by the less sinister term "tumors") can be attacked and sometimes destroyed by the radiologist's machines. In a similar fashion, the economic system purges itself of its unassimilable surpluses by creating vast amounts of military armaments and destroying these, either directly or indirectly by means of inventions which render existing armaments rapidly obsolete. The generals who ask for and get astronomical military appropriations from Congress thus succeed as economic therapists to the state where the radiologist often fails in using similar techniques to minister to the body.

Critics of advertising and sociologists like David Riesman frequently point out that we have become a nation of consumers, enamored of the activity of consuming and neglectful of the claims of creativity. Is it not equally useful to be reminded that we have become enslaved to the production behemoth as an end in itself and that at bottom what we like to think of as commonsense materialism reveals a strange irrationalism that cannot be explained as simple utilitarianism? If you are rich enough you can destroy much, even most of what has been created for you as a jest, a rich man's gesture—and this too has a certain rationality. But it is something quite different when you must constantly destroy so as to be able to create, when you must channel off tremendous amounts of man-power and productive energies into armies and arms so that the diseased production monster is not crushed beneath the weight of its own offspring—those goods and services which we believe we cannot really get too much of and which yet may kill us with the kindness of their munificence.

HARD-HEADED and pragmatic, we are not likely to lose any sleep over this matter of culture-disease in America.

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It seems an obscure threat. The very notion is likely to strike us as metaphysical and mystical—to use these terms as they are commonly meant: that is, simply as pejoratives. And do we not everywhere find evidence of great cultural vitality? Not only in the endless proliferation of material goods that pour out of our factories, but in products of the mind as well, in our intellectual culture? The answer must be that if our culture is diseased it is precisely in its enormous fecundity that this symbolic cancer manifests itself.

The authority of Thomas Mann's work would support this thesis. *The Magic Mountain* is a poetic *Summa* of the protean disguises of disease in our time. Physiological torpor generating intellectual passion, intimations of death evoking intense ardor for life, clerical fascism speaking the language of bolshevism—these are some of Mann's paradoxes; and at their center, giving them form and unity, there is the basic oxymoron of disease masking itself as health, of feverish vitality where one might expect waning powers and anomie. Symbols of disease are appropriate for our cultural fecundity because, as in *The Magic Mountain,* one doubts the authenticity of this show of life and vitality. A society which uses its enormous productive resources to satisfy human needs while perpetually creating insatiable appetites must pay the price, economically, culturally, and psychologically, of an almost unbearable tension between fulfillment and frustration. The phenomenon is nothing if not dynamic; like the real thing—cancer—which kills visibly.

"Golden Rule" vs. Nuclear Tests

Marvin Oppenheimer

The story is told by Steward Meacham of the American Friends Service Committee of how a small shirt factory in Western Pennsylvania was struck by its women employees, of how the company threatened to move its machinery, and of how, on the day the trucks began to move machinery, the girls lay down in the road and stopped the trucks "with the weight of their own lives." Last winter a group of four men decided to sail a 30-foot ketch to Eniwetok in the Marshall Islands to stop nuclear weapons testing with the weight of their own lives; on their second start in May, a half-hour's sail from Honolulu, they were picked up by the United States Coast Guard and brought back in criminal contempt of court. They were sentenced to 60 days (suspended) and one year's probation (no civil disobedience allowed). One appeal has been denied; following two further attempts to skip the harbor, both intercepted by the Coast Guard, all four men are now in jail.

There is a difference between the women strikers and the crew of the "Golden Rule": the experience of most of our lives makes the story of the women meaningful to us, while

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the nuclear protest has as yet failed to be translated into terms which any significant body of American public opinion can understand. The strike against the shirt company was won; the picket line against nuclear weapons testing is still extremely vulnerable to scabs.

The sailboat "Golden Rule" originally put out from San Pedro, California, bound for what the anthropologists call Micronesia, via Hawaii, on February 10. A few hundred miles out at sea heavy storms forced the crew to turn back, upon advice of the ubiquitous Coast Guard. On April 11, the Atomic Energy Commission issued regulations barring U.S. citizens from a 390,000 square-mile area, and an injunction specifically barring the "Golden Rule" from violating the regulations followed soon thereafter. Violation of this injunction on May 1 resulted in the suspended sentence.

Court appeals of the crew are challenging, among other things, a possible violation of freedom of the seas in the original AEC regulations—which, it has been pointed out, discriminate against American citizens by not equally barring from the poisoned zone citizens of other nations. During the last series of nuclear tests, a Japanese fishing vessel didn't make it away far enough fast enough and was severely contaminated.

THE ENIWETOK TRIP was the third action project undertaken by Non-Violent Action Against Nuclear Weapons, which consists largely of pacifists and Quakers. The first was a civil disobedience demonstration in which eleven pacifists were arrested when they trespassed upon the AEC's proving grounds near Las Vegas about a year ago. The second was a "Prayer and Conscience Vigil" in Washington, D.C. last November, featured by silent walking before the White House and poster walking before the AEC's buildings. In this age of recession, walking is becoming ever more popular as a sign of protest, and larger groups walked from New Haven and Philadelphia to the United Nations on a similar errand last Easter. After a shuffling of the organizational letterhead the boat project was conceived. The group is quite clear on the equal guilt of the Soviet authorities, but a contingent eager to carry the message into Russia was turned back by Soviet refusals to issue visas. Some of the participants in the "European Project" had indicated that civil disobedience was a possibility, but all have now returned to the States.

The four crew-members now imprisoned at Honolulu are Albert Bigelow, a former Lieutenant Commander in the Navy during World War II and a Quaker and father of two, grandfather of four; William Huntington, a former conscientious objector and a member of the board of directors, AFSC, father of three and a grandfather of three; George Willoughby, executive secretary of the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, also a Quaker, father of four school-aged children, and former chairman of the Socialist Party of Iowa (he quit on the "war question"); and Orion Sherwood, a teacher. The group had written to Bulganin and to Eisenhower. To the latter, it had said: "Four of us... plan to sail a small vessel into the designated area in the Pacific... in an effort to halt what we feel is the monstrous delinquency of our government in continuing actions which threaten the well-being of all men. We recognize the equal guilt of

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Russian authorities in this matter and plan parallel action to carry the same moral and political message to them . . . For years we have spoken and written of the suicidal military preparations of the Great Powers, but our voices have been lost in the massive effort of those responsible for preparing this country for war. We mean to speak now with the weight of our whole lives . . . " There was no reply.

It might be added that the group has not been afraid to lose the support of a number of individual fellow-travelers of Stalinoid complexion both here and abroad; criticism by such individuals of NVA's anti-Soviet stand and of the European project which was contemplated has been carefully answered but has not changed the group's position. These are no naive muddleheads. They know what they are about. They knew the risks and they realized what might be the pitiful inadequacy of the result.

THEN IF, as they admit, their effort may bring no real change, why do it at all? First it must be borne in mind that a demonstration may take place under a number of motivations. If public opinion is ripe, it can be mobilized into action by a demonstration; obviously, public opinion is indeed concerned about nuclear weapons testing, but few would stretch their necks out so far as to say that this concern is at present very actionable. It would take much harsher experience than America has had, or, failing that, years of education and political activity to get an individual vaguely worried about Carbon 14 across the sidewalk and into the street to do something about it. A poster walk will not do it. The late Pacific Project, certainly as imaginative as anything can be, will not do it either.

If the project was not undertaken primarily for effectiveness, why then? The answer comes down to an "existential" argument: They did it because they could do no other, because no one else did it for them, because politics failed to do it, because the hour was late and because they had to. Effectiveness had little to do with it. This was the individual act undertaken against a state and a condition which seemed omnipotent; above all this was propaganda of the deed, one's physical body thrown into a void where no other bridge seemed to exist. Along a continuum of Quaker theology blending for some into revolutionary and anarcho-pacifism, this is what the "Golden Rule" project boiled down to.

There is no cause here for us to sit back and smile benignly at their "naivete," or simply to reject their refusal to relate to the broader politics of the day. Their rejection of socialist and radical *politics* (if not ideology) is partly because of their historical frustration within radical movements, and partly because while the world is about to go up in flames we sit and read DISSENT and have no movement into which to integrate their legitimate frustrations. They have failed, for now. But in a very real sense their failure is our failure; we may all of us not live long enough to succeed, because all mankind is in that same boat which is now locked up in Honolulu Bay under the surveillance of the U.S. Coast Guard.

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BOOKS

Max Lerner's America

AMERICA AS A CIVILIZATION, by Max Lerner. Simon & Schuster, 1036 pp. $10.

This book is disappointingly bland and inconclusive, an exhaustive balance sheet of American assets and liabilities. As in financial balance sheets, some mysterious alchemy equalizes the two sides; unlike the financial statement, Lerner gives us no judgment of the society's "net worth." Instead, he oscillates between conflicting judgments.

Does money alone talk in America? No, says Lerner: "other values than the acquisitive find a place in American life, and often they triumph . . ." Yet "even when they do triumph, it is only after they have been measured and defended against the money values. . ." Such consistency as the book has lies in hopeful pieties rather than in hard-minded judgments, as witness the way he resolves this dichotomy: "That (non-acquisitive values) survive is the final tribute to their hardihood, and when they do survive . . . they have a greater strength than in those cultures where they do not have to measure themselves so searchingly against the domination effect of the business spirit." But on what basis can we say that the struggle will leave the "victor" stronger, rather than limp and exhausted? Lerner doesn't say; his assertion is merely an act of faith.

This faith is most strongly manifested in his discussion of economic stability. Admitting that American capitalism is most vulnerable on the test of stability, he cites a recent "upsurge of conviction that the cycle had to a large extent been mastered and need never again operate drastically." Those who suggest that boom and bust are inherent in the system are disposed of as "die-hard critics" and the Council of Economic Advisers' reports are mentioned as a form of "corrective and preventive planning" accepted by both Republican and Democratic administrations. He ignores what Leon Keyserling has recently pointed out: that the Council is accepted in the current Administration only as a *forecasting* agency, not as a planning group.

But even as Lerner seems to agree with the "upsurge of conviction" about the economy, he also says that "Americans are far still from solving the basic problem of boom and bust." Which, one wonders, is his considered judgment?

The same problem of finding out what Lerner really thinks is apparent in his discussion of income distribution. At one point he mentions that criticism of the extremes of wealth and poverty "has recently grown faint-

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er because of the overwhelming evidence of American living standards. These have improved *all through the class system* as productivity has increased and the trade unions have been able to claim a share of it for their members" [italics mine]. Roosevelt's famed "one-third of a nation" had by 1948 been reduced to one-fourth, he also reports. But then he says that from 1948 to 1954 the number of families with income under $2,000 dropped only from 9,600,000 to 9,400,000, and this at "a time when the rise in income and living standards at the upper half of the national scale was steady and substantial." Finally he mentions Dewey Anderson's estimate that from 1935 to 1948 only 4 per cent of the increase in national income went to the lowest fifth of the population while "more than 36 per cent went to the top fifth." So living standards have improved all through the class system—but the bottom layer got practically none of the increase in income. Which page of Lerner d'ya read?

SUCH INCONSISTENCIES are partly explainable as varying emphases in varying contexts—and a work of 1000 pages is bound to have many contexts. But partly, too, they seem attributable to an aspect of both Lerner's thought and style: flamboyant journalistic generalization. The period 1933-1957 is characterized as one of

> sprouting babies and autos, of atomic energy for war and peace, of the automatic factory, of the new middle classes, of crowded universities, of TV elections, of stock-market boom and high taxes and skyrocketing incomes which everyone lived beyond.

When we get down to cases, we see that out of these 25 years the baby boom began after 1940, atomic energy for war in 1945 and for peace not really yet, the automatic factory only during the past ten years in any significant degree, and 1952 had the first TV election. Were Lerner less intent upon lively phrases he might have contradicted himself, and confused us, less. For the fine phrase often lacks concrete meaning: what is the meaning of the statement that organized workers are "the core of the American experience?" And how can labor be both "the strongest political group in the nation" (!) while "still a political outsider?"

What is most troublesome is that the author seems to be taken in by his own rhetoric, with unfortunate results upon his analysis. The most disturbing of these results is that Lerner's America turns out to be a surprisingly middle-class America; i.e., that which may hold for the middle-class is much too easily attributed to the whole society.

Lerner writes, for example, that "the problem of scarcity ... has practically ceased to exist for Americans," citing as proof the decreasing number of workers involved with production rather than services. This may be true for many Americans; but it is also not true of many others. Those of the middle class who have enough goods turn to services; because they have effective economic demand, the economy responds by a shift of labor to service industries. But those who still need goods have not the money to create "demand"; they have only *needs* and *"wants"*—and these are not coin of the realm. Surely Lerner himself does not believe that for those 9,400,000 *families* with incomes under $2,000 the problem of scarcity has "practically ceased to exist."

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One more specific comment should be made. Although he stresses the findings of social science, Lerner has few inhibitions when it comes to casual explanation of American behavior. Why do Americans buy "news magazines"? "Mainly because the daily newspaper—with all its bias—offers the American few patterns of meaning." One wonders how Lerner—the columnist of the *New York Post*—has learned that *this* is the reason, rather than, say, the less charitable interpretation that the reader seeks capsulization of the news and an easy source of pseudo-satisfaction regarding the arts and entertainment. The latter suggestion, in the absence of evidence for either, seems at least plausible.

ALL OF THESE are particular faults, and in a book so vast in scope any reviewer is bound to find points that disturb him. In themselves they might not detract greatly from the book's value—unless they were symptomatic or expressive of a deeper malady. This, I think, is the case, and the malady can be identified as part mellowness—a willingness to give the benefit of the doubt to the brighter side of the picture in each section of his book; as part schizophrenia—an inability to make consistent judgments and a disposition to be equally well persuaded in turn by the pros and the cons of the economy, the political system or the state of the arts; and, underlying both, a surprising absence of any criteria for critical evaluation. Surprising, because Lerner's earlier books had the intellectual strength of a coherent position. In *It is Later Than You Think* (1938), for example, Lerner gave cogent diagnosis and prognostication for American society, stressing the need for democratic collective action. And he argued that there was a deep clash of values between capitalism and democracy.

Today, however, he gives split decisions on these questions. Whereas in 1938 the capitalist-democratic split was described in class terms, in 1957, it is "less a class conflict than a split within every American." I wonder: is this so, or is it just that Lerner's theoretical clarity on the property-democracy issue has diminished? For now he finds not a contrast, but "property rights" and "human rights" as "complementary aspects" of democracy. So now the oligarchs have become an essential part of the democratic idea. Small wonder that Lerner, 1958, is much less clear and incisive a critic than Lerner, 1938.

Lerner still sees the basic defects of the American system: that in its abundance of means and techniques it "thrusts into the background the 'why' of the philosophers" and fails to ask the crucial question the Greeks asked: *"To what end?"*; that if it were ever to seek the better as against the merely bigger, "an acquisitive society has few ways of measuring it." But instead of responding with a program of democratic action to meet collectively the needs of the majority, he now sees a planned economy as a system of "external criteria imposed by political leaders and power elites," and argues, with what almost seems naivete, that "America has wisely kept away from fusing its economic and political leadership."

But need the criteria of planning be imposed by an elite rather than drawn from the popular needs? And if that is the way the political system now operates, then the indictment should be of the given system, not of the concept of democratic planning.

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He asserts that in the absence of planning or of an aristocracy to set social goals, these decisions are left to the millions. But confusion is compounded, for he immediately backs away from this by denying that the decisions of the millions are really free—as they must be if they are to be better than the decisions of a few—when the little fish of our economy are so dependent upon the power of the big. And then he leaves the subject.

The weakness of analysis evident here is plainly attributable to Lerner's apparent acceptance (in most of the book) of the pragmatic pitch: that Americans do not bother with doctrinal commitment; instead, our way is a "grappling with whatever needs to be done—and doing it." To this pragmatic strain that gets things done, he then attributes America's success in avoiding the enthronement of fanaticism in national power, or "subscribing to any 'party-line' truth." Why this doctrine of no-doctrine leads to analytic and prescriptive weakness is adequately explained by the author himself in a later passage. Speaking of the alliance of liberal thought with pragmatism, he says:

> the strength gained by the alliance enabled liberalism to focus on concrete situations for reform . . . but made it also vulnerable to the changes and chances of history, squeezing it dry of definite goals and standards.

And this is just the effect that Lerner's movement from a doctrine of democratic collectivism to a faith in pragmatic improvements has had on *America As a Civilization*.

Now I WILL myself display the character of a split pea by expressing a limited admiration for this book and its author. While Max Lerner is as impressed today by America's achievements as he was a few years ago by its failures, he has at least not joined the celebrants who see all problems solved, all tensions removed, all the world America's oyster. A radical indictment of American life can find solid foundation in Lerner's descriptions, and even in parts of his analysis, of America's shortcomings. The details of poverty, the high incidence of crime, drug addiction and mental illness, the pervasiveness of acquisitive criteria—all these and more are recognized, even if too much explained away. Lerner's interpretations may be too rosy, but his descriptions often succeed in getting across the quality of excitement in American life which even the dissenting critic is glad to share.

MICHAEL D. REAGAN

The Test of Torture

THE QUESTION, by Henri Alleg. Introduction by Jean-Paul Sartre. Translated from the French by John Calder. New York, George Braziller, Inc. 123 pp. $2.95.

As one among many thousands, Henri Alleg describes the tortures he underwent at the hands of the 10th Paratroop division in Algeria. Tortures of fire and water, electricity and thirst. The purpose of this notice is

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not to give any details of the events described in this book, but rather to draw the attention of readers to its significance.

This is the first book banned in France since Diderot's *Encyclopedia* in the 18th century. It was seized precisely for its condemnation of the "Question," i.e. torture to elicit confession. The publication of Alleg's book in this country and England is simultaneous with both the triumph and the collapse of French policy in Algeria. The 10th Paratroop division under the command of Generals M- and S-, names marked in this translation by initials only, are today known by their full names in the headlines of our daily papers. They were able to force their will upon the 4th French Republic and bring about its downfall. The collapse of the French policy, however, is also marked by the publication of this book, since the French government did everything to prevent the "internationalization" of the Algerian conflict; yet after the bombing of Sakiet, the appearance of this book in a foreign language shows that the Algerian problem is already internationalized.

In this *cause célèbre* Alleg is Dreyfus and Zola at the same time; yet the responsibility for the crimes rests not so much on the military, but on the Socialist Resident Minister in Algeria, Robert Lacoste, who not only condoned but did everything to cover up the sinister events in these torture chambers.

The crime committed here is beyond denunciation, the sorrow it inflicts upon the victims beyond lamentation. And all this is being committed in the name of "efficiency," in the name of a need of knowing the "truth." But Montaigne already knew that torture is not the test of truth but the test of endurance. The guilty can remain silent and the innocent can take upon himself a false accusation, depending on their degree of endurance.

Victim and hangman belong together and it depends only upon the times and circumstances which role is assumed. Having been a victim does not exclude becoming a hangman: the history of the Communist Parties in Eastern Europe should have already convinced us about this. That Lacoste was in an opposite role not so long ago, did not prevent him from assuming his present one. And Alleg, leading member of the Algerian CP, might have or might not have assumed under other circumstances the role of the hangman. Yet his victory in the test of endurance becomes by a strange turn the victory of truth, of the truth that man's beliefs and his solidarity with his fellow-man cannot be broken by whatever pain and humiliation he has to undergo. And because of this, despite the agony and horror with which the pages of this book are filled, they become a sign of hope.

LAURENT STERN

Nkrumah: A Political Self Portrait

GHANA, by Kwame Nkrumah. Nelson. $5.00.

On March 6, 1957, the former colony of the Gold Coast became an independent nation within the British Commonwealth and took the name of Ghana, thereby recalling a West African empire of medieval times.

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The leader of Ghana's independence struggle has now told his story. Primarily it is a portrait of Kwame Nkrumah the man, and to that extent using *Ghana* as his title may be misleading. The book, like the events it describes, leaves one in no doubt that it was largely due to Nkrumah's leadership that Ghana won its independence; yet the identification of one man with his country does poor justice to the sacrifices of the rest.

As Nkrumah sees himself, he is a man of immense patience who has suffered a great deal. He is not without humor—indeed, that virtue shines through the pages of his book. He also has grit. A man who has spent a childhood of poverty, in fear that his father would not be able to find the threepence a month required for his schooling, his youth weeding gardens and then ten penniless years in the United States, must have a modest amount of grit in order to become the first prime minister of a new country.

Indeed, to call Nkrumah the Nehru of Africa is to underestimate him. Nehru came from a rich family and had the best attention that a doting father could bestow on an only son. Nkrumah came from poverty and lived in poverty. Nehru is not of the people, while Nkrumah is—and therein lies a fundamental difference.

Politically, too, the differences are telling. Nehru had a Gandhi to fall back upon as intellectual and spiritual guide, while Nkrumah apparently did not. Nehru had a ready-made political machine to employ as he pleased. Nkrumah had to build his own party, at great odds and from scratch. Nehru often suffered intellectual uncertainties and self-doubts, while Nkrumah seems to have been totally absorbed in his country's struggle for independence.

None of this is meant to belittle Nehru, since in one major respect things were easier for Nkrumah: he had behind him the experience and success of India in breaking free from the British. India set the pace, so that for those who came afterward examples, lessons and warnings were available.

Nonetheless, the political patterns of India and Ghana had distinct similarities. The British came as traders, stayed as conquerors, and remained dominant by making their peace with petty chieftains to whom they had to give a measure of power. To ease the process of commerce, a small middle class was created, both in India and Africa; and this middle class, taking its cue from the British liberals, then sought the liberty denied to the masses. Whereupon the British turned panicky and tried to set the local entrenched classes against the great masses. A brief and inglorious struggle followed between the chieftains and the mass leadership of the national movements, with inevitable victory for the latter, though not before it had first faced ignominy and imprisonment.

In India the struggle was prolonged and the country experienced almost every kind of government: from viceregal rule to dyarchy, from dyarchy to limited self-rule, and on to final independence. Each phase was separated from the next by nation-wide struggles. The same was true for Ghana—except that if the Ghana struggle was comparatively brief, this was not because the British willed it so, but becaue the British, partly as a result of what happened in India, had no alternative.

IN HIS PREFACE Nkrumah tells us that the men in history who interested him most were Hannibal, Cromwell, Napoleon, Lenin, Mazzini, Gandhi, Mus-

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solini and Hitler—a motley crowd.

Of them all Gandhi probably impressed him most, for though he says that at first he had doubts as to the efficacy of Gandhi's non-violent methods, he later found that "when backed by a strong political organization, it could be the solution to the colonial problem." And then he adds: "In Nehru's rise to power I recognized the success of one who, pledged to socialism, was able to interpret Gandhi's philosophy in practical terms."

Obviously this was the result of some thinking, since in his earlier days Nkrumah had devoted himself to such adolescent means of fighting colonialism as the organization of a conspiratorial society called "The Circle." Highly reminiscent of terrorist movements in Bengal and Maharashtra, "The Circle" had all the appurtenances of secret organizations, such as secret codes, the leadership principle, oaths of allegiance and the like. Between the closed-door scheming of "The Circle" and the open mass meetings of the Convention People's Party which Nkrumah was later to lead, there was a significant difference. But how did this come about? What contributed to this transformation? Nkrumah, who tends to be reticent at crucial points, does not say.

There are many similar gaps in his book. In his preface he writes: "But even a system based on social justice and a democratic constitution may need backing up, during the period following independence, by emergency measures of a totalitarian kind."

Here Nkrumah shows that he is a poor student of the techniques of Gandhi and Nehru. India had difficulties quite as great as those of Ghana. The princes, for example, were all-powerful and in no mood to accommodate themselves to the revolution. But Vallabbhai Patel, the organization leader of the Indian Congress Party and Nehru's superior in the art of ruling, found methods for dismantling the princely structure without "measures of a totalitarian kind."

Nehru too, like many leaders of emerging countries, is an autocrat and once described himself as a possible dictator. But India had counter-balances to Nehru who, it should be added, at least abhorred dictatorship intellectually. Are there counter-balances to Nkrumah in Ghana? Does Nkrumah abhor dictatorship, even intellectually? From his book it is hard to say. The Prime Minister of the first free African state has to be on guard against himself, for in a young and undeveloped country both the powers and temptations of its leaders are particularly great. The success of both Ghana and other potential African states will partly depend upon Nkrumah's commitment to democracy and upon his ability to guide his people along democratic ways.

M. K. KAMATH

Because of our last-minute effort to include material on the developments in France, a number of articles, communications and letters scheduled for this issue had to be held for our next issue—for which we already have on hand a good deal of interesting material, including: "When Mao's 100 Flowers Withered," a documentary report by Michael Walzer, and a review of Simone de Beauvoir's book on China. There will be at least two more articles on China. Plus: Ben Seligman on Marxian Economics, Fejto on Djilas (with, perhaps, some comments by others), and a few special things that are "in the works."

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FROM UNDER THE LID

"Now, we raise the question whether in such a form of capitalism—which actually represents a certain negation of capitalism, because of the fact that the internal market, the circulation of money, has disappeared—a crisis can occur. Would we have crises there? I believe not. *Can there exist in this society a contradiction between the restricted consumption of the masses (consumption in the* physiological *sense) and the growing productive forces? Yes, that may be. The consumption of the ruling class grows continuously, the accumulation of the means of production, calculated in labor units, can grow to enormous dimensions, but the consumption of the masses is retarded. Perhaps still sharper here is the discrepancy between the growth of the productive forces and the growth of the consumption of the masses. But just the same we will not find any crises.*

"A planned economy exists, an organized distribution, not only with regard to the reciprocal relations between different branches of industry but also with regard to consumption. The slave in this society receives his share of fodder, of the objects that are the product of the total labor. He may receive very little, but just the same crises will not take place."

N. Bukharin, 1928.

Evidence of rather widespread disaffection or at least dissatisfaction among Russian writers has been frequently reported in recent years. We have heard of a number of attempts of Russian novelists, playwrights and critics to express in more or less veiled form some of their disgust with key features of the contemporary Russian scene. But while we are relatively well-informed about writers, less attention has been paid to similar signs of disaffection among other types of intellectuals. That is why we feel it of some value to print here excerpts from a rather remarkable article by one R. I. which appeared in the Moscow review *Nasa Stvarnost* (1956, No. 10). The article expresses not only a most astounding departure from the usual Soviet views about the character of contemporary capitalism, but it contains formulations which make it appear as if the author is attempting here to describe not only Western state capitalism but the contemporary Russian economy. Some of his formulations have a remarkable resemblance to those of Nicolai Bukharin, who developed a theory of state capitalism in the Russia of the twenties which, though it was also ostensibly concerned solely with trends in the Western world, seemed nevertheless quite applicable to the Russia of Stalin. Though Bukharin was, of course, liquidated in the Moscow trials, one may now wonder whether R. I. is still influenced by the writings of Bukharin, which have been

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banned in Russia for more than 20 years, or whether he arrived at his conclusions independently.

R. I.'s article starts with a polemic against one J. Shilin who had maintained in an article entitled "Has Capitalism Changed" (*Nowoje Wremja* 1956, Nos. 34 and 35) that Lenin's characterization of modern capitalism as developed in his *Imperialism* was still fully adequate for an understanding of present day Western economies. R. I. then continues:

"He does not take into consideration the most important fact of the extraordinarily strong increase of the role of the state in the economic and social life of many countries. But this fact is most characteristic for the period after the great depression of 1929 and especially for the period after the Second World War . . . the state became the decisive factor in the field of investment, be it as direct investor or in the form of giving control and direction to private capital; through taxation, the credit system and other measures the state gained control of capital accumulation and implemented the distribution of an ever increasing part of the national income; the state sector of the economy increases in all countries; the state fixes exchange rates, foreign trade relations are now regulated by the government alone, etc. . . . This has deeply changed the earlier freedom and independence of private capital as well as of capitalist monopolies. In this way a specific economic structure—state capitalism—*in which several laws of capitalism* are no longer operative or have been eliminated, has come into being. State capitalism limits private property and the free movement of capital and shows the tendency toward the full negation of the latter. . . .

". . . State capitalism grew out of the depression in order to overcome it. That is why it had to eliminate several laws of capitalism. State capitalism is in this respect—as Lenin called it—a 'precursor of socialism,' but in its 'deepest core' it is still capitalism, since *it is still based upon the hiring of labor—the relation of the state as owner to the producer, i.e., the relation of the producer to the means of production and to production remained a relation of exploitation.* [My emphasis. L. C.]

"This development in the economic sphere becomes possible given an approximate equilibrium of the originally antagonistic classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. And just because this process weakened the positions and the power of the bourgeoisie and thus made it impossible for it to rule in the old manner, and because the working class was not yet strong enough to take over the direction of society, there emerged the autonomy of the state and its dominion over society . . .

"Once the state attained autonomy, it created under state capitalism its own social representatives in the form of numerous functionaries, of a bureaucracy. This stratum now struggles in the arena of social conflict for the strengthening of state capitalism, for its further development. This development tends toward a point where the state becomes the exclusive owner, the general capitalist."

R. I. then proceeds to show that state capitalism reduces the basis of the economic power of the bourgeoisie and hence gains the support of the working class. At the same time, however, it threatens the working class

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since "the immanent laws of state capitalism drive towards not only total dominion over capital, but also total enslavement of the working class." R. I. then continues:

"It thus follows that the state under capitalism is not only no longer the organ of a specific class of capitalist society, but even ceases to defend and strengthen the specific interests of that class. It is precisely this fact which explains why the state has become independent of society, relatively autonomous, above society. But it also shows the weakness of its foundations . . . "

"Shilin," says R. I. "rejects the opinion of those who assert that important changes have taken place in the role and economic function of the state, that the stratum of technocrats plays an important and independent role in social and economic life, that there have been shifts in the class structure . . . Shilin refuses to speak of a revolution of the economic functions of the state in the sense that from a 'nightwatchman' it became the leading and organizing factor of economic development..... "

These passages are interesting enough in their own right to require no immediate comment. But one cannot help wondering: could a writer as astute as R. I. fail to notice that his description of "state capitalism" (italicized above) fits exactly the social system of Russia today? And if this has occurred to R. I., has it not perhaps occurred to other Russian intellectuals?

L. C.

Many interesting features are planned for future issues of DISSENT —some are already at hand. Your guarantee of getting all issues is to SUBSCRIBE—now!

Miscellany

Reflections on Literature as a Minor Art

Paul Goodman

I AM SETTING down the following melancholy reflections not with any hope of a remedy, but because the matter is important and nobody else seems to be saying it.

In many ways literature has, in this century, become a minor art, more important than pottery or weaving, perhaps less important than block-printing or other graphics. Firstly, it is no longer an art of either the mass-audience or an élite audience. Cinema and radio-television, journalistic photography and series of illustrations, and persistently architecture and a kind of music: these are arts of the great public in a way that books, even best-sellers, have ceased to be. For the élite, the policy-making, audience there is no particular art as such; in its artistic taste and needs this group does not distinguish itself from the rest of the people. (To be sure, rich people collect *objects* of paintings and sculpture and thereby support artists, but these artists do not produce their works for the collectors any more than poets write for them.)

To the extent that in metropolitan centers the stage is still a popular art, it is not a literary stage, the emphasis being rather on the stars, the spectacle and music, and the production.

The diminution of letters is especially evident to those of us who write very seriously, who try for the classical literary functions of subtile ideas and accurate distinctions, ingenious and cogent reasoning, distilled learning, poetic expression. These functions are not easily or often adapted to the major modern media, to cinema, photography, or television, for in the adaptation they are blurred, blunted, curtailed, and lost. We are not then deceived, like other writers, by the illusion of finding ourselves in the swim; we cannot be made use of; we practice a minor art and occupy a minor place. The comparison to pottery and

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weaving is apt, for what we are doing is analogous to individual handicraft, no doubt rare and beautiful, compared to the major media of the present which tend to be produced by teams with a standard technique, not unlike machine-production.

These are, I suppose, the first decades in the western tradition that letters have not been a major art. It is a situation so peculiar that it is not noticed. Now the shift to other media is not necessarily a cultural misfortune. It happens that, on the whole, cinema and television, etc. have so far produced pathetically inferior works that cannot pretend to compare with the masterpieces of book and stage over 2500 years; but it is not inconceivable that the new media will get hold of themselves (I do not say "mature" since, in cinema at least, the works of a generation ago were much more promising than those today). Naturally, for men of letters our new status is personally unfortunate. We were trained in a tradition where letters had a quite different ambition and scope; our adolescent fantasies of becoming major artists are doomed to be fantasies; and ironically, just because we are too good for the current scene—for we draw on a tradition better than the current scene, but that tradition is irrelevant—we find it hard to adjust to the realities. Also, when, as often, we are called on to teach our English and our Literature, we find ourselves like curators in a museum; the average student (like the average editor and publisher) no longer reads English like a native. This is lonely-making. But as Trotsky said, "History fells the dead wood and the chips fly off."

II

A second way in which literature has diminished is that it is no longer the source of ideas important for social policy and moral behavior. Such ideas as now get influentially abroad—I am not often impressed by their wisdom or brilliance—originate among economists, social scientists, administrators and businessmen, and technologists. Now this lapse of letters from a major position is not a new thing. When Shelley spoke of poets as "unacknowledged legislators," he should have meant not merely that they were unofficial but also, by his time, unaccepted. By the 19th century, compared to the preceding 500 years, although men of letters still had respectable positions in the homes and palaces of the policy-making élite, they certainly had ceased to function as important first sources of ideas that would eventually shape practice. The exceptions stand out and illustrate my point: the social-revolutionary ideas of the Russian writers that brought nearly every major Russian man of letters to jail or exile, or the moral ideas of the European and American writers that at once awakened the censorship. These writers were thinking up ideas not for the makers of policy, but against the makers of policy.

(In general, through the ages we can estimate the importance of letters as sources of policy by the negative test of the censorship of letters. Where books are heavily censored, books are important for social policy and moral behavior; and throughout the high middle ages and in modern times there was always a heavy censorship. But through the 19th century, except in Russia, this decreased, and in our own days it is trivial. Of course in America it is not from the government that we would expect the important censorship of ideas or expression, but from those who control the capital-means of communication, the owners of radio stations, publishers, theatrical producers. Let me then suggest the following possibility: since what these persons do diffuse is not important, policy-making. literature, if there exists any important literature at all, it must be in what they refuse to diffuse, what they censor. It is possible that that exists. Note that in our times the question of the *quantity* of diffusion of ideas is essential. Since there is little legal censorship, it is possible for nearly any idea to get itself printed; but our country is swamped with printed matter —more than twenty books a day are printed in large editions and literally tons of newsprint and magazines—and there is no difficulty in muffling any idea at all by refusing to spread it widely. Indeed, we have the interesting paradox of precisely the overworking of printing-presses being a possible cause of the reduction of literature to a minor art.)

So far as the subtile, learned, reasoned, and persuasive treatment of ideas is a

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function of letters, our present shift to other major media, and literature becoming a minor art, *is* socially unfortunate. Cinematic and pictorial arts do not treat ideas adequately; that is a verbal business, it is specifically literary. Moving pictures can powerfully determine norms of behavior and style of life. The picture-coverage of an event in an illustrated magazine can powerfully direct what people feel about it. But subtile and learned explanation, the application of history and experience, the play of thought and hypothesis, the effort toward the truth under the surface that does not leap to the eye, everything that Matthew Arnold meant by "criticism of life," these things are not skilfully accomplished without letters and training in letters and a high expectation from letters. In the earlier and hotter days of thought, Socrates complained that a book was a poor thing compared to a man because you couldn't question it and reason with it; he would have taken a dim view of audio-visual education.

III

In one important respect, however, literature cannot become a minor art, for it is the art of language. In every generation, the art of letters renovates and codifies the style of speech, assimilating what has sprung up new, inventing new things itself. This is far-reaching, for the style of speech is our interpersonal attitudes, which are largely patterns of rhetoric and syntax; and also the style of speech is a good part of our philosophy of life, for a point of view proves itself viable and gets abroad by being able to tell a real story in a new way. (So the plastic arts, drawing and painting and sculpture, cannot become minor arts for they demonstrate perception, how people can see and are to see; and so a people's music is its kind of feelings.)

Speech is not going to stop changing, and so men of letters, marking down the speech, relating it to character, and developing the characters, are always indispensable. And the strong and subtile writers are fulfilling this function as always. But the mass of speakers are faced with the dilemma: on one horn they must get their style from the writers; on the other they have ceased to follow writing, or expose themselves to it, as major artistic experience. The result is that the ever-new speech is not strongly characterized and explored into its poetry and ideas and assimilated with a great humane tradition; people get their speech, in low-grade letters, as a caricature and a stereotype, with the conformism and thin conversation that we hear.

Letter from Italy: The Experiment Ends

Mario Diacono

"FASCISM RETURNS in Europe; generals in France, bishops in Italy." So, a few days before May 25, the radical and anti-clerical weekly *L'Espresso* summarized the mood which characterized the last week of the election campaign.

The election results confirmed this forecast. By increasing from 10 to 12 millions the votes cast for the Christian Democrats, who have for the last ten years practically monopolized the government, the Italian middle class has shown it wants to live quietly and securely, all but giving the Catholic party *carte blanche* to carry on a cautiously conservative policy.

This is, in effect, a situation analogous to that of 1948. On April 18th of that year the Christian Democrats, exploiting the fear of a Communist regime, were able to obtain an absolute majority of seats in Parliament. In the following elections on June 7, 1953, the people balked at exchanging a fascist regime for a clerical one within a few years' time. They failed to give the majority party the number of votes it wanted to free it of dependence on other parliamentary groups. The Christian Democratic party did need the support of other political groups in order to govern; at first these were the Republicans, the Liberals, and the Democratic Socialists, later only the Liberals and the Democratic Socialists, and finally, by benevolent abstention, the Monarchists and Socialists.

IN ORDER to maintain an equal distance between the left and the right, the Christian Democrats have for many years pursued an "immobilistic" line, a policy which increasingly tended to postpone,

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rather than face, the solution of the most important problems—agrarian reform, teachers' salaries, the relationship between private and government enterprises, the part played by the Church in the internal affairs of the government. In each particular case the Christian Democratic party had to try to find the parliamentary groups it needed to support its particular policy—groups which were often in disagreement with each other. When it did not find these groups, it simply put the problems aside. At last the party secretary, Fanfani, declared that his party could not carry through all the legislation necessary to establish a climate of reform in the country, because it lacked a stable majority in Parliament on which it could base its reform program. But his argument merely tries to conceal the fact that the "solutions" were based on compromises reached within the party headquarters, solutions which did not take into account the wishes of the groups involved. "Progress Without Experiments" was Fanfani's election slogan; and the middle class agreed with him.

One fact, however, makes this election different from that of 1948, so nostalgically remembered by the Christian Democrats. While the middle class then feared an experiment to the left, this time they were afraid of an adventure to the right. It is fairly certain that the French situation, with an extremely unstable Parliament on the one hand and the threat of Civil War on the other, has led many voters of the right—more than half a million—to quiet their consciences by voting for the party of the bishops and the cautious middle class. There was, therefore, a proportionate increase for the parties of the Left and of the Christian Democrats, along with a collapse of the parties of the Right. The Christian Democrats gained 1,700,000 votes and 11 seats; the Communists and Socialists together had 1,300,000 more votes and 6 more seats than in 1953; the parties of the Right lost 600,000 votes and 21 seats. This was in the Chamber of Deputies. In the Senate, the Christian Democrats gained 10 seats and are now close to having an absolute majority.

By the election of May 25, the Italians showed they feel more comfortable with large parties, that they are not interested in the individual political problems, but prefer to choose on general principle and then let the parties take care of the particular questions. The smaller groups, the Liberal party, the Radical Republican party, and the Social Democratic party, which had based their election campaign on particular ideas (themes), were practically ignored by most of the voters, even though in Parliament they hold a nucleus of 45 seats with which they could be the decisive factor in forming a government if they had a united political platform. However, while the Social Democrats and Radical Republicans now tend toward a line which is clearly to the left, the Liberals tend toward the right, and the Christian Democrats will probably take advantage of this division.

THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS are determined not to collaborate with the largest Socialist party, arguing that it is still tied to the Communist party. But a new fact of Italian politics is precisely that the Socialist party, after the 20th Congress of the USSR and especially after the events of Budapest, has gradually become independent of the Communist party. It is true that a part of Pietro Nenni's party is not convinced of the desirability of an autonomous Socialist policy, one having full liberty of action in respect to the Communists, yet not falling into the state of impotence often shown by the Italian as well as the French Social Democrats. Clearly, however, the Italian Socialist party, along with that of the Social Democrats, has entered a new phase, out of which it is still possible that there will arise a single Socialist party which will no longer seem to the middle classes to be afraid of itself, and which could pave the way for that reform of the structure of the State which must take place in order to lift Italian society out of its immobility. Right now this immobility is fully affirmed by the vote of May 25, which firmly anchors the largest Italian party to the political right.

On the other hand one can't expect much from the two Socialist parties. For one thing, their leaders lack the keenness of the intellectuals who spark the still tiny Radical Party, and who are almost the only ones in Italy capable of applying a political and moral conscience on a national level. It is, as a matter of

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fact, this group rather than the Socialists that the large number of intellectuals who left the Communist party in 1956 and 1957 joined. For the moment they are the spice of the Italian political writers, but they have shown no hold over the masses of the people. If the Christian Democrats had the strength to free itself from the attraction of the right, which does not seem very likely now, an alliance between Radical intellectuals and political Socialists could effect a decisive turn in Italian politics. Otherwise, there may have begun in Europe the end of the democratic experiment.

Tr. by LARISSA B. WARREN

Sibley at Stanford

Richard Drinnon

DOWN ON THE FARM, as Stanford University's campus is sometimes called, an atmosphere of the leisurely past is carefully cultivated. The campus itself, sprawling across acres of precious Peninsula real estate, seems to argue for days gone by when a university was a community of scholars and not one word was heard of strange "naval science" courses entitled, "Supply Ashore, I," "Supply Afloat, II." But Stanford, although wavering between its Ivy League pretensions and its attraction to the myth of the Golden West, has decided to plant both feet squarely in our hurried nuclear present. The Farm's gracious acres may soon rest over a two-mile tunnel housing a large electron accelerator.

On the eve of this year's Academic Freedom Week President J. F. Wallace Sterling provided additional evidence that Stanford is hurrying to catch up with tomorrow. Sterling announced that Stanford would not offer a permanent appointment to Mulford Q. Sibley, Visiting Professor from the University of Minnesota.

The basic issues in the Sibley controversy are not blurred by the uncertainties which curse most such cases. Many students at Minnesota regard Sibley as far and away the best lecturer on the campus. As for his scholarship, he is co-author of *Conscription of the Conscience,* a study of World War II conscientious objectors which won the American Political Science Association's highest award (ironically, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Award!) in 1953. Not incidentally, he is a member of the Socialist Party and of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. In addition to all this I must add that he has profound moral impact on those around him.

It was obviously with the thought of "looking Sibley over" for a permanent position that he was invited to Palo Alto. Within a remarkably short time his colleagues in Political Science were so impressed that they unanimously recommended him for the opening. Dean Philip H. Rhinelander of the School of Humanities and Sciences, who at first had some reservations, finally gave strong support to the recommendation.

Then Provost Frederick Terman made his move some two months after the recommendation reached the President's office: Sibley was informed that he would not be offered an appointment since he had not done enough research. President Stirling approved Terman's veto and denied that Sibley's political views had anything to do with the decision.

THE PROVOST is, of course, the key man here. Terman has a rather interesting background as one of his father's geniuses who went on to at least partially fulfill the old intelligence tester's expectations. Terman the Younger has become at one and the same time an able, rather heavy-handed Dean of the School of Engineering, Director of the Electronics Laboratory (here the future again), and, of course, Provost. Given his background and his affinity for the concrete, whether in bridges or ideas, Terman places primary reliance on the hard-headed engineers in his own School and on the no-nonsense empiricists in psychology, the department where his father reigned supreme for so long.

Terman, in any case, once revealingly inquired why a political theorist was needed at all. Evidently, in Terman's view the modern political scientist might as well forget Plato and de Maistre and instead chart public opinion or draft city charters, much as one of his engineers would draft plans to connect a housing project with the city sewer.

Perhaps Terman's actions can be explained simply in such terms as his con-

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flict with a fellow dean, his predilection for the concrete, his theory of centralized university control. Yet the suspicion lingers that Sibley might still have been offered the appointment (there is no assurance he would have accepted) if his politics had been more conventional and his action more "discreet." During the Political Science Department's deliberations, it is rumored, an inquiry came from the administration whether Sibley might not "embarrass" the University. (Following solemn consideration, the Department replied that he would not.) Finally, the San Francisco *Chronicle* quoted a "University figure," who declined use of his name, to the effect that while Sibley's political views were not the controlling factor, "when a person is considered for appointment, he is considered as a whole and you can't overlook any activity."

SAVE FOR AN INDISTINCT rumble or two, the matter might have come to rest at this point. Not only was the faculty not prepared to take a forthright stand on the issue of a possible intrusion by the administration into the realm of political views, but it was willing to accept the right of the Provost to veto a faculty appointment. An impressive number of students, however, were of a different mind. Stew Toy, editor of the *Stanford Daily*, cudgeled the administration with a front page editorial charging that it "has lost sight of a university's basic goal: to educate the students." A student petition, containing the names of over three hundred of those who favor Sibley's retention, was presented to the administration. Other petitions demanding "the real reasons" for the administration decision were circulated. A student strike was even considered. Not least, a series of articles on the university structure appeared in the *Daily*, beginning with the observation that "authority is not buttressed by wielding it as a club" and concluding by advocating a standing student-faculty-administration committee to pass on, among other things, faculty appointments.

This case has meaning primarily because of the student response. Sibley has a good position to go back to at Minnesota; the Terman-Stirling team have muffed an opportunity to gain a distinguished man. The Stanford faculty seems able to act in concerted enthusiasm only over the question of higher salaries. But that the privileged children of this supposedly defeated generation care enough about their freedom to fight for it, is welcome news. Perhaps everything associated with a future of gigantic, superpower atom smashers will not slide in effortlessly after all.

A Telephone— But No Visa

READERS OF DISSENT will know Edouard Roditi as an occasional contributor on Islamic problems. Others will remember him as an American poet and critic of literature and art. Born in Paris of an American family that has resided there for three generations, ever since his grandfather was one of the founding members of the American Chamber of Commerce in the French capital, he is well-known to the French radio-public too as a frequent speaker in round-table discussions of foreign, especially American, authors published in French.

In 1954, he took an apartment in Paris and applied for the installation of a phone line. He was told he would have to wait a year, unless he obtained priority through the support of a professional organization. As he was scheduled to leave shortly for Algiers to interpret there at a Conference of citrus-fruit growers and packers from Mediterranean countries, he postponed obtaining this support until his return, a few weeks later.

On his arrival in Algiers, he discovered that he had been engaged in the same team of seven interpreters as Haakon Chevalier, the American novelist whose name was at that time being bandied about in the press as an atomic spy, alleged to have attempted to obtain information, on behalf of the Russians, from Oppenheimer, at the University of California, where Chevalier and the atomic scientist had both been on the faculty. After the Citrus conference, Roditi then spent a couple of weeks of vacation in Algeria, visited several other cities, spoke to people in all walks of life and took notes for various articles. One of these was subsequently published in DISSENT,

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another in *Preuves,* the French counterpart of *Encounter,* and later in English in *Jana,* a monthly published by Associated Newspapers of Ceylon. On his return to Paris, he was surprised to find a phone installed in his new apartment.

ALL THIS OCCURRED before the outbreak of the Algerian rebellion. Later that year, a French poet whom he had met in North Africa, Jean Sénac, came to Paris for the publication of his first volume of poems, which appeared with a preface by René Char, in a series selected by Albert Camus, with the Paris firm of Gallimard. Sénac stayed in Roditi's apartment until he could find a room of his own. Early in 1955, Roditi then applied at the Paris Police Préfecture for a renewal of his old *carte d'identité* as a foreign resident. He was issued the usual temporary *récépissé,* pending the routine investigation.

In April 1955, Roditi was summoned one morning to the Rue des Saussaies offices of the French Sûreté, where he was held ten hours and grilled by the political police. Accused at first of having gone to Algeria with Chevalier as a Communist agent, he was then challenged, since this seemed obviously untrue, to disprove fantastic evidence to the effect that he was a secret American agent whose task it had been to contact future leaders of the Algerian rebellion. Though the grilling proved that his telephone wires had been tapped for close on a year, it was also clear that none of the Sûreté agents had ever taken the trouble to read any of his published writings. Proof of his being a Communist included his occasional meetings with Antonina Valentin, a popular biographer of Heine, Goya and Leonardo da Vinci who was at that time working on a biography of Picasso, which was considered sufficient evidence of her being a Communist. Proof of his being an American agent included Roditi's wartime employment with the French radio section of the Voice of America in N.Y.

A cople of weeks later, Roditi was refused his *carte d'identité* at the Paris Préfecture, on a technicality, and had to leave France for a few days in order not to overstay his authorized three months there as a mere tourist. During the next three years, he continued to reside in Paris, but as a tourist, leaving France every three months. He had immediately reported the whole incident of his grilling and of the Préfecture's refusal to the American Consulate, which preferred not to take any action.

IN DECEMBER 1957, Roditi then came to America, to spend Christmas and New Year with his family. On arrival in New York, he applied for a renewal of his American passport, which was granted immediately. Early in January, he applied at the French Consulate in New York for a visa as a resident of France. His application was forwarded to Paris with favorable comment, as he had submitted proof of having a home in Paris and sufficient means of support. Early in February, he left on an assignment for Italy and, on February 25, returned to Paris, having heard no further news of his visa-application.

On March 10, he was awakened in the morning in his Paris apartment by French plain-clothes police, rushed off to the same Sûreté offices as the last time, handed an expulsion order dated February 26, photographed, finger-printed, and told to leave France by midnight of March 12. During the next two days, every appeal was blocked by Roger Wybot, Chief of the responsible Division of the Sûreté, who refused to communicate the relevant files to the interested French Ministries. The American Consul-General in Paris was persuaded only with great difficulty to file a polite enquiry with the French Foreign Ministry.

In London, Roditi subsequently discovered that the French Sûreté had attempted to serve similar expulsion orders on several British correspondents, or had threatened them with expulsion, because their articles filed from Paris were critical of French policies in North Africa. The Paris correspondent of the London *Observer,* in particular, had been threatened, but her publishers and her Government had intervened energetically. A Paris correspondent of a Ceylon newspaper had also been threatened, as well as correspondents of most Moslem newspapers, including those of the more conservative and less vociferous Pakistani press. All of them had been properly protected, however, by their consular authorities. Only Roditi, an American free-lance writer, has failed to obtain energetic support from his government.

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